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TRAVELS

IN

SICILY AND MALTA, &c.



TRAVELS IN *SICILY AND MALTA:*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. DE NON, *(A.R.A.)*

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KING OF FRANCE,
AND MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE.

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IN

SCIENTIA MILITARIS

TO HONOUR THE WORK OF THE BRITISH ARMY



THE
JOURNEY
IN
SICILY AND MALTA.

JOURNEY IN SICILY.

M E S S I N A.

ON the 2d of May, 1778, at noon, we set out from Reggio, in calm weather, and at half past one, when about half way over, discovered the tower of the Pharos. At two miles from Messina, that city opens itself in the noblest manner, by masses elevated in the form of an amphitheatre on vast bases, confirming the idea you have formed of those towns, which appear in the grounds of the pictures of Poussin, and in those of the grand style of historical painting. We bore down on the castle of the Lantern, and passed over the

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celebrated Charybdis, without experiencing the slightest motion. The effects of this whirlpool are only perceptible at the very moment that the currents from the north and south, meeting at this point, rush against each other, dash up the water, and produce the vortex. When there is no wind, the smallest boat is only subject to a little tossing; but when storms are added to the currents, the largest vessels are drawn into it, and are liable to be driven ashore on what is called the dry point, which from its hardness, is as fatal as a rock; or they may be hurried by the current towards Scylla, on the coast of Calabria, at ten miles distance, a still more dangerous shoal, and far from all possible assistance. We doubled this point of Charybdis with the utmost tranquillity, passed under fort Saint Salvador, which is the key of the harbour, and after a passage of three hours, arrived without the royal gate, reckoned to be twelve miles from Reggio. Here we had a view of the most beautiful harbour ever formed by nature, lined with the handsomest quay I ever saw, decorated with a range of buildings, nearly uniform in its whole length, interrupted only by a number of arches, which serve as entrances into the corresponding streets

streets that terminate upon it. At the bottom of the port is the king's palace, the residence of the governor of the city, before whose door the vessels of the royal navy lie at anchor. Near this is a covered walk, the first I had yet seen in the whole kingdom of Naples, where there is so much need of shade. Following this walk you arrive at the citadel, which is almost impregnable, and cannot be attacked by sea on account of the currents and the difficulty of anchorage. It is not overlooked on the land side, whilst it commands the city and the harbour, against which it seems as if the batteries were principally directed; and in fact it was built by Charles XI. after a revolt of the inhabitants. Beyond this citadel projects a tongue of land, which is disposed by nature as happily as the wish of man could have desired it. There is a communication by a covered way, and a wide subterranean passage formed under the jettee, between the citadel and two forts; that of the Lantern, which points on the channel on the Calabrian coast, and that of Saint Salvador, which defends the entrance of the port, and secures it against a bombardment: the anchorage beyond the reach of cannon shot, being at the depth

of upwards of two hundred fathom, amidst dangerous currents, a fleet can neither keep its station in the channel, nor annoy the place from a distance. It seems as if nature had designed even the whirlpools of Scylla and Charybdis, to serve as guards to this superb port; which is capable of containing all the ships of Europe, and where vessels arrive, as at Marseilles, at the very door of the merchant, where they find what depth of water they think proper, and where it would be unnecessary either to moor or anchor, but for the violence of the *sirocco*, the only wind it is exposed to, and by which they are in danger of being driven out to sea. I had expected to find Messina, like all the other towns of Italy, beautiful in its exterior, but dirty, poor, and miserable within. This city surprized me a second time. I found handsome streets, beautiful squares, elegant marble fountains, equestrian and pedestrian statues of bronze, large and handsome churches, vast convents, and tolerably well built hotels. The population formerly corresponded with these appearances, but the plague of 1743, and 1744, reduced it from one hundred thousand, to thirty thousand souls. Messina has never been able to recover

this

this loss, which renders the remote quarters almost deserted, and has left the houses in them to fall into ruin.

The plague was brought there by a Moorish vessel, from which a bale of goods had been stolen at the Lazaretto. Instead of providing against such an accident, by a more strict guard, they have ruined commerce, by multiplying difficulties on entering the port to vessels coming from the Levant, so as to deter any of them from frequenting it. The principal church, built by Count Roger, is richly decorated in a tolerably good gothic style, except the crown of the front; but I have no where found such richness and high finishing as in the inside. All the vaulted roof, and the timber work of the nave, are supported by columns of antique granite. The front, if not antique, is of equal beauty, and the same finishing. The marble pulpit, executed by Caggini, a Sicilian sculptor of the sixteenth century, does honour to the talents of the artist, and the taste of the age he lived in. The great altar, which is of Mosaic, ornamented with gilded bronze, is so highly finished, as to leave room for regret, that so much expence and

labour were not more worthily bestowed, and applied to designs of a grander style.

The church of St. Nicholas, in a modern taste, is worthy of examination.

I did not expect to find any antiquities at Messina, nor was I deceived in my conjecture. The very advantageous situation of this city has made it the constant object of attack with every nation, which had any pretensions on Sicily; the invaders having uniformly overthrown, or endeavoured to occupy, this city, as a post essential to the security of their conquest. It was sacked 399 years before Christ, by Imilco, the Carthaginian general, who, to avenge the losses it had occasioned to his army, and the consequent failure of his expedition, destroyed it to its foundations, broke the very stones, burnt the wood, and massacred all the inhabitants, except one, who attempted to swim over to Italy, and succeeded.

This Messenian's exploit surpassed that of Hercules, who is said to have landed in Sicily, borne on the horns of the cows of Geryon. This strait is six miles wide, and the passage very practicable, from the rapidity of the currents, which, at certain hours, may convey a swimmer, with great velocity, from one shore to the other.

other. The next day I returned to the terrible Charybdis, which, according to Homer, thrice every day ingulphs the wave, and thrice vomits it back with a tremendous noise. Apparently it is wearied of this operation, for I found it, as on the preceding day, extremely calm, and not an object of terror. The only difference I could observe, consisted in a tolerably distinct oscillation, like a boiling, at the junction of the two great currents. This is the origin of the ancient tradition, that these whirlpools attracted and swallowed up the passengers; and as they hurry every thing that comes within their vortex to a great distance, hence it was added, that ships were thrown up again, after their submersion. At this spot, and at a small distance from the shore, the sea becomes of a sudden so deep, that it is impossible to measure it, and the lead loses its direction, from the force of the currents. This gulph has possibly been formed by these very currents, which have washed away the sand from the bottom. One of its peculiarities is, that at the nearest shore, the pebbles are incrusted with a bitumen, like the sugar on burnt almonds, to which this production bears a considerable resemblance: though soft at first, it becomes

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hard

hard when exposed to the air, and in process of time so obdurate, as to be formed into mill-stones for corn and oil, and to bear cutting and polishing. Is this sort of *brecche* ¹ produced by a mud proceeding from the whirlpool? This is the more probable, as this formation exists only on the most contiguous shores; and in proportion as you leave them, the petrefaction becomes perceptibly less compact and hard: it ceases altogether at a little distance from the point of Charybdis, and re-appears only on the opposite shore, on which the current has a direct bearing; but here the incrufation is so inconsiderable, as to produce only soft stone for building. I have since found the same petrefaction on the other coasts of Sicily, and seen it applied to the same purposes. Various attempts have been made to form charts of the currents in the Straits of Messina, but they are so multiplied, that none but the mariners, who pass their lives there in fishing and navigation, know any thing of their effects, and that too, without being able to give any rational account of them; there are currents in all directions, which vary with the

¹ *Brecche* is a species of marble.

months, the day of the year, and the hour of the day. They prevail in the whole extent of the strait, to the very bottom of the port, and render it impossible to come to anchor in the middle of the channel.

Urged by apprehension of the heat and bad air I was likely to encounter, in my tour of Sicily, I postponed every thing that remained for me to see at Messina, till my return: for from its position and temperature, there is nothing to be feared in that city, either from heat or cold, or any intemperature of air, which being continually freshened by the sea, purified by the mountains, agitated by the currents, and moderated by the shade and shelter, renders it one of the healthiest and most agreeable habitations of the whole world.

Taormina, or Tauromenium.

We set out for Catania on mules, which cost us six carlins a day, accompanied by two guards, who cost us twelve. Their professed use was to protect us against banditti, but in fact this is only an established imposition, and is become a necessary piece of pomp for travellers, who, as they are made to believe, proceed without

without respect and helpless, if not attended by these huge bobadils in uniform, at sight of whom indeed, all the peasants you may stand in need of in your journey, tremble and obey.

We left Messina on the 8th of June, at day break. The road was lined with plantations for the space of five miles; it was then the harvest of the silk worms, which is the principal production of the district. The silk here is excellent, much finer than that of Calabria, and greatly esteemed by the French merchants, who come here in search of it for the manufactures at Lyons. The country further on is dry and stony, planted only with a few olives, and intersected by a number of torrents, called rivers; if streams deserve that appellation, which flow from the rocks only in winter storms, and furnish not a drop of water for nine months in the year. We doubled the Cape *Della Scaletta*, a steep rock, on which there is a tower. Behind this rock, is the old castle and village of that name, each of them built upon a rocky point, a few miles from thence. We stopped to take some refreshment at *Fiume di Nisi*, eighteen miles from Messina. Some thunder-claps, followed by a few drops of rain, for which we were indebted probably

to

to our vicinity to *Ætna*, laid the dust, which had greatly incommoded us in the morning. Our caravan was composed of three guards, one of whom, a *Barigel*, similar to our *lieutenant de mirechauffée*, was the chief; two other armed guards, a conductor and director of our baggage, likewise in uniform; a running footman who served them; *Messieurs Renard and Després*, architects, and *Chatelet*, a painter; my *valet de chambre*, cook, barber, and intendant, and myself who brought up the rear; forming altogether, with the mules, a troop of nineteen living creatures; a formidable body, calculated to spread terror among the villages where we halted; on the inhabitants of which, I am very sure, our *barigel*, who had the care of our subsistence, imposed that of our horses, though we paid him dearly for it. We left this place at *twenty o'clock*, that is to say, at four hours before night, to reach *Taormina*, which is but twelve miles from *Fiume de Nissi*.

The whole country, as far as Cape *St. Aleffio*, is dry, poor, and melancholy, but it becomes picturesque at the Cape. The castle of *Aleffio*, built on a rock suspended over the sea, is extremely singular, and very important

from

from its situation ; it terminates a chain of mountains, and blocks up the road from the coast, so as that fifty men would stop the progress of a whole army. Forfa is built on the summit of the same chain, and adds to the picture of the ancient castle of Alessio, where there are a few cannon, but no walls to bear them. We clambered up this defile, and on the other side discovered the charming country between us and Taormina, with the profiles of the mountains beyond it. We next bent our course towards a village near the river Lettoyan, whence you discover the ruins of the theatre of Taormina, and part of the modern town, seated on a platform, surrounded by steep rocks. The ancient approach, doubtless, is lost, or some convulsion of nature has destroyed every trace of it ; for from the little bay, which forms the road of Taormina, up to the very town, you are obliged to climb by a dangerous and almost perpendicular path. It being night on our arrival, we had no time to see any thing curious, but the governor, and the convent of the capuchins, where he quartered us. We supped in the refectory, with the guardian, who did us the honour of sharing the travellers supper we had brought,

brought, and of drinking the Syracuse wine the governor had sent us, as soon as he knew that I belonged to the king of France's household. The next morning I found him in his palace, built by the kings of Arragon, and where John of Arragon, defeated by the French, shut himself up, as he himself testifies, by the following inscription still to be discovered on the tower.

EST-MIEHI-I-LOIV REFVGII.

We next went in search of the antiquarian of the country, Don Ignatio Cartella, so learned, as our governor told us, so very learned, that the king had created him *Ciceroni*, and who, in consequence, gave us such methodical information, that the noon-day sun found us at the first antiquity, and fortunately rid us of our scholar, who left us to go by ourselves to the theatre, one of the most interesting, and best preserved of all the ruins. It seems as if nature had intended here to give the plan, the draught, the elevation, and situation of the most complete of theatres, and that the hand of man had done nothing but finish and form it to the use of the nation that decorated it. The recess of the mountain gave the portion of the circle, it

it was only necessary to hew the steps out of the rock, and to erect over them a building *en mattoni*, forming an external and an inferior gallery, which crowned the edifice. The fore-scene was formed by two steep rocks, between which was the *proscenium*, on a terrace disposed likewise by nature: for the Greeks had not, like us, the foolish pride of vanquishing nature, by decorating spots, the most repugnant to such embellishments; but selecting the happiest situations, they added to the favourable circumstances of accident, and produced the sublimest things at no greater expense than our very moderate productions.

This is truly the case with the theatre of Taormina, which is certainly the most beautiful monument of antiquity extant. Though its diameter be very considerable, and it has no subterraneous gallery, it is so sonorous that you can hear the least articulated sound from every part of it, and wherever you strike it; it resounds like an instrument. Nor is your admiration less excited by the natural advantages of its situation, than by its local beauties. Behind the *proscenium*, there was a covered gallery, and two terraces in the form of an amphitheatre, from whence the spectator discovered

ed the most beautiful, the grandest, and most sublime picture that could possibly be seen; first, three projecting rocks which seemed to serve as ramparts to the city, built chiefly on a platform, and descending in an amphitheatre to the sea; a large bay, from beyond which flows the river Alcantara, formerly the *Onobla*, which bathed the walls of Naxus; further on, the whole of that rich country covering Mount *Ætna*, the lofty woods which form its zone, the eternal snows that clothes its upper region, its majestic summit lost in the clouds, or vomiting forth a torrent of smoke; and, opposed to these, the delightful plain of Leontium, advancing into the sea by different Capes, forming, amongst other levels, those of Catania, Augusta, and even that on which Syracuse was built, and loses itself in the vapour. Such was the view from the gallery of the theatre, and which served as a bottom curtain for those who were placed on the upper benches. Nor was the side on which you entered less magnificent; the whole coast of Sicily was displayed to view; the mountains which border it, those of Calabria, the point of Italy, which from this spot had the appearance of an island, and the sea progressively

gressively narrowing itself to the Pharos of Messina. The reader may imagine, whether, with our motives for travelling, the enjoyment of such a spectacle, afforded us an exquisite degree of pleasure; accordingly we were all occupied, and all supremely delighted.

From this theatre, which we quitted with the utmost reluctance, we returned to the capuchins. Near our door we discovered an antique aqueduct, on which at different periods, several modern ones have been erected, that cover or conceal the ancient work, and render it impossible to give an exact account of it. We were only able to discover, that the water arrived there from different quarters, and that at the junction of these streams, the channel was large enough to admit a human body. Higher up, other aqueducts apparently conveyed water to five vast reservoirs, the first of which, in perfect preservation, furnishes the plan and section of the four adjoining ones constructed against the mountain, of which nothing is to be traced but ruins. These reservoirs, though not so large, were exactly in the taste of that of Baiæ, called the *Piscina admirabilis*, and may have been models of it. These edifices were oblong squares, with arches supported

ported by pillars. There was in each an aperture to convey the water, another to let out the superfluity; a staircase to descend by, and a sluice to empty it entirely, and for the purpose of carrying off the mud. The water from all these piscinæ, was conveyed to a naumachia, in the middle of the city, the vestiges of which are remaining on one whole side of its elevation. It was decorated with several large arches, and square niches in the thickness of each pillar. The whole was *en mattoni* (brick-work) and perhaps coated. I found the usual impressions on the bricks, in characters which I took to be Greek, but they were so effaced, that it was not possible to transcribe them. Some other vestiges which we discovered within the neighbouring houses, gave us the parallel side of the edifice, and consequently its width; but we were unable to trace out any fragments of the walls which would enable us to ascertain the length. The basin is now filled with earth, and planted with orange trees, and the part destined to spectators, is a garden terrace, covered with a vineyard *en treillage*. The streets of the modern town, the courts and houses, are every where interspersed with fragments of antique walls, aquæducts, and mosaic pavements. I found

one of these in a street, different from any I had yet seen ; it was composed of pebbles of all sizes and colours, so strongly cemented together, that it admitted of being sawed in block, and the flake when polished, formed an elegant and substantial pavement, possessing all the beauties of the most precious marbles.

The churches exhibit nothing remarkable, except the collection of indigenous marbles, which are more numerous and abundant, than beautiful and brilliant in their colours. The convent of the Dominicans is a great cloister with marble columns, the simple order of which forms an admirable contrast with the two hills that overtop it, on whose summits are placed the castle of Taormina, and the village of *La Mola* ; which is a principality. In the church, situated in the great square, I found several fragments of marble, which were discovered in digging the foundations of a house near this convent, with the following Greek inscriptions :

Ο ΔΑΜΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΤΑΙΡΟΜΕΝΙΤΑΝ
ΟΛΥΜΠΙΝ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΟΣ ΜΕΣΤΟΝ
ΝΙΚΑΣΑΝΤΑ ΠΤΩΘΙΑ ΚΕΔΗΤΙ
ΤΕΛΕΙΟΙ.

Thus

Thus explained in the country:

“Populus Taormeni Olympium Olympii
“ filium plenum victorem in Pythiis equo
“ veloce perficit.”

There is another also in marble, with the following words:

ΓΑΙΟΣ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ
ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΤΙΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΑΕΛΛΟΣ
Γ.

“Caïus Claudius Marci F. Marcellus gym-
“ nasiarca.”

Near the gate of Messina, we still find an antique fabrick, which serves for a house, and has nothing particularly striking about it; but on the outside of the gate are a great many tombs, without any other building, which give room to imagine, that this quarter was wholly consecrated to purposes of sepulture. The first you meet with is so completely destroyed, that it is impossible to describe its form. Two circular parts however are still to be discovered, with the incrustation of the white marble with which it has been coated; another part, straight, lined also with marble, with pannels and mouldings now hardly perceptible,

C 2 and

and two trunks of columns *en mattoni* are also seen: but all this is so buried and effaced, as to render it impossible to distinguish the antique, from the modern walls erected on the same spot, to form the landing place of a walk. Close at hand is another large tomb, or little temple, built with large blocks of hewn stone, laid without mortar, and elevated on three rows of steps which encompassed it: it is now converted into a church. This tomb was seven fathoms long, by four fathoms two feet in width.* It would be difficult to decide, whether this monument, which is of a beautiful construction, be of Grecian or of Roman workmanship. Near it are others not so magnificent, but elevated likewise on three rows of steps. Their form is a square of fourteen feet; the outside covered with stucco, with a pilaster at the angles: within they are decorated in the manner of the Romans, with niches to deposit the ashes; among which is one appropriated to the chief of the family. All these tombs are inhabited by peasants, who dwell in them with their children and cattle.

These monuments are certainly coeval with the Romans, that is to say, posterior to Cæsar,

* The measures are all French—the French foot is 12 inches 9 lines English.

who

who having expelled the inhabitants of Taormenium, placed in it a Roman colony. The origin of this city is lost in the obscurity of ages. We know that it was considerably augmented, when Dionysius, in the 94th olympiad, four hundred and three years before Jesus Christ, having taken and destroyed Naxus, its inhabitants came and settled here.

The country, to the southward, is strewed with buildings, shapeless it is true, but which exhibit at once the ancient plan and grandeur of the city.

This proud city, in fine, destroyed like the others by the Saracens, and fortified by the Norman conquerors, is at this day reduced to a population of three thousand poor inhabitants, whom an annual tax of £1500 sterling reduces to beggary. We left this place the third day after our arrival, at four in the afternoon, and two miles further on, arrived at a mole formed by a bed of Lava, which would have made an excellent harbour, had it continued to extend itself in the form it originally assumed. This terrible Lava, the period of which is unknown, is twenty-five miles distant from the mouth of Ætna, or above eight leagues from the centre of that volcano.

At some distance from this is the river Cantara, the ancient *Onobla*, on the banks of which stood the city of Naxus, founded by the Chalcidians of Eubœa, who landed in this country, and expelled the inhabitants, in the year 3284 of the creation, seven hundred and twenty before Jesus Christ. It may be deemed therefore the first Grecian city in Sicily, and one of those, whose destruction was the completest, and of the most ancient date.^b What might have been still remaining of its ruins, has been covered by the lava I have mentioned, which occupies the whole country, and is of so compact a nature, that time itself has not been able either to alter it, or change its colour, which is nearly black.

We travelled amongst cinders as far as Giari, where we slept. The nearer you approach Ætna, the more rich and fertile in productions is the country. The lowest plain is covered with immense fields of flax and hemp, and watered by rivulets, which generate an unwholesome air, the first we had experienced. After this, you meet with vineyards, mulberry, and other fruit trees. Every

^b By Dionysius the Tyrant, who levelled the houses and the walls, and bestowed its territory on the Syracusians.

thing seems to grow here with luxuriance; it is the picture of the golden age; and I was now more firmly persuaded than ever, that a volcano is necessary to the happiness of a country. I now began to judge of the height of \textcircumflex Etna by the comparison I formed between it and Vesuvius, which is not half so far from Naples, as we were from \textcircumflex Etna, yet the latter already seemed over our heads. Being now as near it as we could be on the road we were following, we determined to ascend it on that side, and to descend on the other, that we might make the journey shorter, and to acquire a more perfect knowledge of the mountain: at Giari therefore we took for a guide the man whose business it is to furnish the town with snow.

MOUNT \textcircumflex ETNA.

We began our journey the 11th of June in the morning: some snow had fallen in the night, which covered its whole summit, but although we knew that the snow would melt in the day time, we continued to ascend for three hours, and in our journey found a second spring, a most delightful country, with groves of trees and the freshest verdure; a youth-

ful, smiling, rich, animated and teeming nature. The Elysian fields, and the Tartarus of the Greeks, seem to have been imagined or copied after *Ætna*. To describe it, one must be both a poet and a painter. The scattered plantations resemble those landscapes of *Boucher*, wherein he has crowded together all the riches of nature, without confusion. This is a school for painters in the agreeable, as well as in the terrible. Whatever is great, or beautiful, or terrible, in nature, may be compared to *Ætna*, and *Ætna* can be compared with nothing. After taking some refreshment at an inn, and laying in our provisions for the evening, we proceeded on our journey. In two hours we quitted the region of the vineyards: the trees began to augment in size, and we found the remains of an ancient forest of chesnuts, of an enormous size, which proves the prodigious fecundity of the volcanic ashes. These colossal trees, growing almost on the naked lava, fasten themselves to it, by fixing their winding roots to these immoveable blocks, and remain immoveable and eternal like themselves. But there is matter of still more astonishment, a few moments after, on arriving at the *Centum Cavalli*, or the seven brothers, which is a single chesnut tree coeval with the world: the

the heart of this tree is open, nothing remaining but the sap divided into seven mangled stocks, which still bear enormous branches. I several times made the complete circuit of the trunk, and always found it took seventy-six paces to arrive at the place from whence I had set out, five and twenty for one of its greatest diameters, and sixteen for the smallest. The Canon *Recupero* has since informed me, that notwithstanding the vast antiquity of this tree, its size was continually increasing, such is the fecundity of the soil; that he had formerly cleared away the earth two feet deep around the trunk, and measured the circumference, and that in his last observations he found the dimensions increased. I myself observed in it, what I never saw in other trees, tender branches proceeding from the very heart of the old stump, in the part opposite to the sap, in the centre of that part which was the hardest and least capable of shooting forth a bud, or of admitting the circulation of the juice. This tree taken altogether is so monstrous, that it has rather the appearance of a grove, than the produce of one and the same growth. On examining it with attention, you see plainly that

that seven distant stocks of such a size never could have been produced so near each other ; besides that the rents are so exactly conformable, and so evidently tending to the same centre, that a shadow of doubt cannot remain of its being one single tree. Calculating the time it must have taken this tree to attain such a thickness, and adding to it the time necessary for its decay, with the period since which it has been known in its present state, this vegetable production will reckon a great many centuries ; and if it adds nothing to the archives of Mount *Ætna*, will occasion no small derangement, at least, in those of the known duration of the life of chesnut trees. It must be observed however, that these colossuses are the production of a variety of concurring circumstances peculiar to themselves, such as their exposure, the winds, and the region in which they grow ; for lower down on the mountain the same tree grows long and slender, and seems to be of another species. We may add likewise, that the nature of the chesnut tree is such, that the heart hardens, becomes ossified, and dies, whilst the sap and bark survive, and acquire such strength, as to produce and support the longest branches.

branches, without the succour of the trunk; for although the branches of this tree do not correspond with the thickness of its stump, they are seventy-eight paces in diameter in their greatest extension.

In the middle of this tree is built a wretched hut seven paces long by eight in width, and as many in height. If instead of this hovel, a simple altar had been built here, in the antique style, nothing would have been more magnificent, nor have borne a stronger resemblance to a temple of the Druids: the wildness of the site and the antiquity of the tree inspire the very sort of horror we entertain of their mysterious sacrifices. It may be truly said, that this production reminds us of that gigantic stature in which the poets painted the Cyclops who inhabited Mount *Ætna*. But if human Nature has really degenerated from those extravagant dimensions, the race of inhabitants of this mountain still retain an extraordinary proportion: and if Nature at that period bestowed but one eye upon the Cyclops, it seems as if the present race were still worse treated; for almost all the old men are blind, and those of the middle age, have their eye-lids blood-shot,

shot, red, and sore. This is to be attributed probably to the volcanized air, or the volatile and corrosive dust of the cinders, which perpetually destroys the fibres of that delicate organ. The same dust attaches itself to their skin, becomes glued to it by perspiration, and gives them all the appearance of blacksmiths. These people however are nothing less than savage, but on the contrary, possess all that amenity and gaiety, which plenty creates.

The rain surprized us at *Centum Cavalli*, so that we were obliged to break open the door of the hovel, and take shelter in it. The *Sirocco* having collected all the clouds of the plain, covered the mountain with them, and made it vanish from our sight. In hopes, however, that the rain which fell in abundance, would render the summit the purer, and the plain more disengaged from vapours, and that the next morning at sun rise, we should have a more perfect enjoyment of the *coup d'oeil* we were in search of, we continued our journey during the bad weather; and in fact, after we had proceeded two hours, the wind changed, and we saw with rapture the enormous

mous masses of clouds falling from hill to hill, till they were far beneath our feet.

We had already passed the region which produces grain and fruit trees; the chesnut trees disappeared, and gave place to oaks, which were soon succeeded by the fir and the birch. The mountain was now uncovered, and displayed itself to us with still greater grandeur, in proportion as we approached it. We were on the edge of the perpetual snow, where it is higher than the summit of Vesuvius from the level of the sea, and had no longer any vapour over our heads but the column of smoke issuing from the tremendous mouth, and were courageously advancing, when the treacherous *Sirocco* took us again with more violence than ever, and again rolled over us fresh torrents of mist. We arrived, thus groping our way, at Cazota, a cabin without doors or windows, which afforded us for chairs and beds, nothing but sharp and pointed lava. We had quitted the flowers and nightingales, and were returned to winter. As we were wet, our first care was to fell a tree, and make so large a blaze, that we set fire to the two wretched beams which supported the roof of the most melancholy

of

of habitations. We were in want of water too, and were obliged to drink brandy and eat cheese, whilst we kept stewing ourselves in the smoke of the green wood. Thus did we pass the night, wrapped up in our cloaks, stepping out every instant to consult the stars, and see whether it were possible to set out, still flattering ourselves with the hopes of reaching the frozen region by the break of day. Our desire and our impatience made us brave every thing, and though the weather was unfavourable, imagining that the morning might change it, we set forward on our expedition. For some miles we travelled through torrents of lava, and over fragments of fallen firs, rugged and sharp cinders, black and ferruginous scoriæ, intermingled only with white and vitrified points. We ascended and went round several *montagnuoles*, (little mountains) more or less ancient, of a greater or less degree of elevation, but all of the same form and nature: the only living creatures we met with were herds of goats, as wild as those of Polyphemus, and condemned to an eternal winter.

The clouds having again renewed the night, we were obliged to return to our miserable quarters. Here we waited until noon, when

the weather growing worse, and our provisions being exhausted, we were compelled to raise the siege of the mountain, so obstinately defended by the fogs. The darkness was so great when we got on horseback, that it was with difficulty we could discover and follow each other. We kept along the flank of the mountain, in order to reach *Tre Castagne*. All I could perceive during a three hours march was, that the road was neither so difficult, nor so hard as the preceding day, and that we trod on cinders of different degrees of firmness, alternately red, grey, black, and of a rusty colour. We heard the thunder growl, which was a dead noise to us, as long as we continued either above, or in the storm itself; but when, continuing to descend, we found ourselves in our turn pressed by the cloud, we heard it in its grandest effect, repeated by the echo of each valley, lengthening out the peals. It was like the effect of a rolling fire of musquetry, heightened by the bursting of the bombs. The mist was changed into a hoar frost, and soon after fell in a rain which reminded me of those of Naples; for, since my departure from that city, I had not received a single drop, and but for *Ætna*, should have imagined,

imagined, that out of Naples, no rain fell in Italy. A few months after, when we were the most wet, I discovered the sea and the sea coast, where the sun was shining in full splendor. This mortifying prospect we had before us till we arrived at *Tre Castagne*, to which place we were accompanied by the rain.

Tre Castagne is a large village, containing three thousand souls, built on a very ancient volcano, surrounded by other more considerable ones, and almost all cultivated to their very summits, or clad with the most beautiful woods of chestnut trees. We took up our lodgings with the Capuchin Friars, where on straw and clean sheets, we recovered from the fatigues of our unsuccessful expedition. On leaving this place, we could not help looking back at the mountain, and calculating the fatigue it would cost us, were we to re-commence our operations; for the pleasure of this curiosity, from the extreme difficulty of gratifying it, may be ranked, in my opinion, among those enjoyments which are better to have been taken, than to take.

CATANIA,

CATANIA.

We had still twelve miles to descend before we reached Catania, which may be discovered at the distance of three miles, situated on the banks of the sea, on the declivity of a crater, as ancient as the world, and surrounded by two rivers of lava, which make you shudder at the fate it must have several times experienced, and of the still greater risques it ran about a century ago. Nothing less than the fertility of its territory could have inspired the inhabitants with the courage, or rather the obstinacy, to build and rebuild in a situation which receives no advantage from the sea; which is without a river, and without fortifications; exposed to all sorts of natural misfortunes, and continually threatened with the dreadful calamities which have already so frequently overwhelmed it with terror, loss, and destruction. It was already a city when the Tyrians, attracted by the commerce they had begun to carry on with the inhabitants, made a successful attempt to establish themselves there, and expelled the natives. These again had been already driven away by the Siculi, a people which came from Italy, when the

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Chalcidians.

Chalcidians dispossessed the Sicilians, and settled here seven years after the foundation of Syracuse. Alcibiades afterwards surprised it, in the expedition of the Athenians into Sicily, whilst Nicias was laying siege to Syracuse. The Grecian army presenting themselves before the walls, Alcibiades demanded permission to enter alone, and speak to the people assembled at the little theatre. No sooner was he arrived, than eager to hear and see so celebrated a man, the guards quitted their posts, and were soon replaced by the Athenians, who took possession of the gates, and rendered themselves masters of the town. After the departure of the Athenians, Arcesilaus, General of the Catanians, delivered it to Dionysius, who levelled the walls, transported the inhabitants to Syracuse, and bestowed the territory on the Campanians. It was taken in the first Punic war by Valerius Messala, in the 489th year of Rome^c, and became a Roman colony: in the succeeding ages it followed the fate of Sicily, was laid waste by the Saracens,

* Amongst the booty he made there, he carried off a sun dial, an instrument at that time unknown at Rome, which was placed on a column near the Rostrum.

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and was afterwards ravaged by the still more destructive hands of the Normans. Falling to the lot of Count Roger, he reduced it within a narrower compass, to render it more strong. It was next laid waste by Frederic II. another ravager of Italy. He built there, at the expense of the Grecian monuments, the castle which is still existing, and which in the year 1669, was surrounded by a dreadful lava, that removed it from the former shore, by forming a new one to a considerable distance in the sea. Twenty-four years after, it was overthrown by an earthquake, which destroyed nineteen thousand inhabitants, leaving nothing but the castle, which was preserved by the lava, a few walls of the great church, and what was remaining of ancient edifices, whose bases were too solid to suffer from the shock, and were not so lofty as to admit of being overthrown. The inhabitants on their return, resided for some years in wretched hovels, until it was finally rebuilt in the present century, as we now see it, on a regular plan, with long, strait, and wide streets, but so disposed as that in the middle of the day, this burning town is totally without shade, and almost impassable. It is much to be regretted that the great expen-

ces of its wealthy inhabitants have not been directed with more taste ; for if instead of vast palaces, and large churches of an obsolete and fanciful architecture, the buildings had been erected in a simple and noble style, Catania might have been one of the most magnificent cities in the kingdom of Naples.

The market place however is not without beauty ; it is a square cut off at the angles, and decorated with arches supported by marble columns. In the great square are two antique fragments, most happily grouped : They consist in a part of an Egyptian obelisk of granite, with hieroglyphic characters, which they have placed on the back of an elephant formed of lava, the ancient symbol of *Catania*. I take this to be a work of the middle age. It was executed in imitation of the fountain which is at Rome, opposite the Minerva, after a design of the Chevalier Bernini, who had discovered, as it is said, the model of it, on an antique medal. They have not made so elegant a use of a great number of superb columns taken from the ancient theatre, and adapted to the front of the principal church, built at first by Roger, and restored on the same ruins since the earthquake. I found against the wall,

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in one of the vestries, a large picture, executed at the time, giving an accurate representation of the track pursued by the lava in 1669, with a view of the city, such as it then was.

Under this church, and before the portal, the baths of the ancient city were situated. The prince de Biscaris, that most dignified and polite nobleman, was so good as to shew me this excavation executed at his own charge, as well as that of the amphitheatre. This prince, at an expence the more commendable, as it is less in the way of admiration, has had the spirit to restore the modern Catania to the glory of its ancient splendor. Profound study and learned dissertations have furnished him with the means of restoring to day-light, and the eyes of observation, the remains of every thing which has been swallowed up in the obscurity of ruin and destruction.

This respectable prince, whom we may be permitted to praise without self-love, since to approach him is to have matter for commendation, deigned to attend to us with the utmost complacency and patience. He replied to our questions, as if we obliged him by listening to

his information. The part of the baths, both which he has already excavated, though considerable, forms but a small portion of that vast edifice, and consists of an external gallery, two entrances, and an interior peristyle, which communicated probably with the apartments of the baths, and is composed of porticoes supported by pillars with semicircular arches lined with a stucco, formed of volcanic ashes; on which were modelled various figures, reposing on ornaments of fanciful foliages. The mode in which this work was executed is still discoverable, with the manner in which the figures were traced out on the plaster before the reliefo was added, as well as the method of placing the first masses, in gross materials similar to the first coating, previous to their receiving the coating in which the work was finished. It is difficult to judge of the nobleness and elegance of this building, the water, which escapes doubtless from the ancient conduits, having prevented the search from being continued to its original foundation. In the thickness of the walls are seen ancient aqueducts, with a discharge for the waters from the upper parts; there you discover the stone jambs and lintels to which the doors were fastened.

fastened. The water of these baths still serves to turn two mills. The foundations of the church, and of private houses, have put a stop to the researches of the prince.

From hence he was so good as to conduct us to the excavations of the amphitheatre, which are much more considerable, shewing the immensity of this structure, and the labour bestowed in building it: its destruction is attributed to the Norman princes. What we now see of it is but a skeleton, from which they carried off even the *mattoni*, leaving nothing but the great masses composed of lava, which they were unable to remove, and the rubble work of the same materials, which they did not think worth the labour. These ruins consist of large square pilasters, whose cornice, which formed their capitals, composed regularly of four great stones of lava of equal size, supported the arches which constituted the external gallery: a second gallery, on which rested the flight of seats, communicated by stair-cases, with the upper corridors, and the passages from the arena. This edifice was separated from the higher ground of the adjoining mountain, by a low street,

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and, apparently, in consequence of its having been shaken by an earthquake, as we are led to suppose from the derangement of the layers of stone, pillars of masonry had been adjusted to the pilasters, which intersected the projection of the cornice, and supported arches, which traversing the street rested on the wall built against the face of the mountain. There is reason to imagine that these arched buttresses served likewise as a communication between the upper street, and the superior passages from the arena. We still find here, as at Nismes, the stones pierced at those places through which the timbers passed, that supported the canvas, which covered the amphitheatre. The construction of this edifice is not of stone without mortar, but the rough and porous lava is bound by a cement as hard and indestructible as itself. This despoiled edifice, which was incumbered in the walls of the barbarous city, presented nothing but a hideous object which had been removed from view by burying it under a heap of rubbish, and its ruins were only discovered in levelling the ground, on the last rebuilding of the town. The traces of it are still visible on the street of the public square, in a fragment of a circular

wall

wall which supported the vault of the lowest of the interior galleries ; so that the ground of the square at this day is but at the height of five rows of benches from the level of the arena. The same inconveniences which put a stop to the excavations of the baths, have here fixed boundaries to the curiosity and generous researches of the Prince.

He next conducted us to the theatre, which has suffered still more, from its being more liable to ill treatment, on account of the immense riches it contained. What still remains of it, and the result of the Prince's labours, prove, that it was as grand as that of Taormina, was built in the same form, and decorated with a magnificence surpassing the imagination of our age and country. Some of the benches accidentally preserved, and a corridor commencing at the entrance which was parallel with, and adjoining to, the stage as far and even farther than the half of its circumference, give us the exact proportion of its size ; and we have its interior aspect from the form of the houses built on the walls of the upper gallery, as well as from the curve of the segment of its circle. The benches, two feet from each other, besides the avenues by which

they

they were vertically intersected, had landing-places in the form of foot-ways, at regular intervals: the whole was lined with white marble two inches thick. The stage, of which nothing remains, was decorated with large columns of granite, which are now placed in the front of the great church, and fixed on pedestals of one single block of white marble: one of them is also in the Prince's court-yard. The court of his *museum* is also filled with various fragments in marble, consisting of the capitals, bases, frizes, and cornices of this theatre; and the whole city is besprewed with shafts of granite columns, of a moderate size, which supported the superior gallery of this magnificent edifice.

Close to this great theatre, was another communicating with it by a stair-cafe, and which served either for the rehearsals, or for performing under cover; or it was probably a place calculated for music, like our concert halls. The same thing has been discovered at Pompeii. But the one is still under the ashes, and this is not sufficiently cleared to give a perfect idea of the interior forms of that sort of edifice. Near it is a chapel in the form of a rotunda: this is also an antique building,

ing, and belonged probably to the baths. The *forum* was close to it, as well as the prisons, of which there are no remains, though they were distinguished previous to the last rebuilding of the city, which is scarcely completed at this day.

At the Benedictine convent there have been magnificent baths, lined with marble, decorated with figures and Mosaic pavements. Considerable fragments of them are existing in the Prince's palace. From a piece of this Mosaic, which was at one of the gates, and bore a Latin inscription, we may presume that they were of Roman construction. Another formed in compartments of Grecian marble, serves by way of pavement to the cabinet of the Princefs.

The difference of style of these two fragments led me to suspect that they were not of equal antiquity. On communicating my sus- picions to the Prince, he told me that during his researches he has remarked coatings over- laid on others, in certain parts of the build- ing, which seemed to be a repair. The Mosaic I have mentioned, with the Latin in- scription in ill shaped letters, as well as two other fragments I saw at the Museum of the

Monks,

Monks, represent the months of the year in awkward figures ; and the name of the month which is written, seems to prove this repair to have taken place at the period of the Lower Empire. Unfortunately this opinion is no longer capable of discussion, as these vestiges were obliged to be covered up as fast as they dug the ground, in order to complete the plan of this immense convent. By this we have lost a Nymphæum, of which there is nothing extant but the plan, now in the Prince's possession. Near to this convent and the walls of the ancient city, they have discovered the fragments of a famous temple of Ceres, a Nymphæum, the Gymnasium, and a Naumachia that was near the castle, the vestiges of which were to be seen before the lava of 1669 had covered them, and two arches of the aqueducts leading to which are still visible in the lava.

So many public edifices of every sort, crowded together in so small a space, must have left but little room for the houses of individuals ; which may lead us to conclude, that this city has been embellished at different periods, or, as I had before remarked at Pompeii, that the private houses were extremely small

small in comparison with the public buildings; or that the ancient Catania was still more ornamented than extensive, and, consequently, more rich than populous. The modern town is something of the same nature; for though its population be estimated at sixty thousand souls, you see nothing in the streets but convents, churches and palaces, separated by a few private houses.

The well known situation of all the ancient edifices inspired me with the desire of ascertaining the different spaces, by marking them on the modern plan, and by drawing them as they are under the houses which cover them: the result of this operation proved the possibility of re-establishing an antique plan.

It is difficult to assign the epocha of this splendor of Catania. Could it be from the period of the arrival of the Greeks to the days of Hiero the First, brother of Gelo, who expelled the inhabitants, and replacing them by Peloponnesians and Syracusians, gave it the name of *Ætna*, and assumed the glory of being its founder? It still bore this name, when Dionysius, to revenge himself for the succours it had given the revolted inhabitants of Syracuse, levelled its walls, and bestowed its territory

ritory on the Campanians. After the death of the tyrant, the citizens of Catania, having in their turn driven away the Campanians, restored to the city its ancient name. It is from these revolutions, and the medals struck at these different periods, that the opinion has originated, that Hiero, or Dionysius, *built* a city called *Ætna*, which has been placed at a venture in every system of geography; the real situation of which no person has ever been able to discover, nor have any vestiges been found to justify the suspicion of its existence. Was it during the long peace enjoyed by Sicily under the reign of Hiero the II^d. or subsequent to the fourth Punic war, when the Romans having destroyed the ravagers of this island, remained in quiet possession of it? The great quantity of Latin inscriptions discovered in the different edifices, the baths, the amphitheatre, the Gymnasium, and Naumachia, the use of which was known only to the Romans, would incline us to decide in favour of this latter period, which extended itself to the very incursions of the Barbarians; who began by breaking the statues, pillaging the bronzes, and melting the metals to convey them off.

Next

Next came the Normans, who, barbarously catholic, piously despoiled the beautiful temples of the marbles with which they were lined, to construct their miserable churches.

The ruin of their edifices in the wars occasioned by the frequent contests for this fine country, and the pretensions of all the Princes of Europe, the fortresses hastily formed of those already disguised fragments, the frequent mutilation of these beautiful coatings, and those noble masses of marble, at present reduced almost to nothing, would have rendered the existence of these magnificent antiquities problematical, though described by history ; if, in the total overthrow, the very excess of the disorder itself had not preserved some samples by burying them, and if a taste for the arts, perpetuated in some individuals, did not daily rescue these precious relics from the injuries of time and ignorance. Such is the obligation the modern Catania has to the Prince of Biscaris, who has not only excavated, as much as possible of the ancient monuments, but has collected, with as much taste as magnificence, a *Museum*, which I employed three days in visiting, and which would require a volume to describe.

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His collection consists of whatever Catania and Sicily produce that is curious in antiquities ; such as the remains of architecture, Mosaic ornaments, Roman and Grecian materials for building ; sculptures, among which, one single colossal *Torso*, found at Catania, may be ranked with the most beautiful pieces of antiquity ; a collection of earthen vases, the most valuable existing, from the number, the forms, and preservation of the figures represented on them ; another of antique bronzes ; the natural history of marine productions, plants, shells, and fishes ; and the productions of the earth, such as minerals, vegetables, volcanic matters, marbles, precious stones, and animals : the whole arranged in an order which at once exhibits science, taste, and industry. You see likewise a series of arms, armour, and singular costumes. The Prince has had drawings taken of all these, with the intention of having them engraved, and annexed to a history of Sicily. This work, equally learned and curious, is expected with the more impatience, as no person is so well qualified as himself to make the world acquainted with this interesting kingdom. Notwithstanding the advanced state of this work,

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the Prince had the extreme complaisance to suffer us to copy many things, of which a soul less noble than his own would have envied us even the sight.

We took some drawings also at the Museum of the Benedictines, which is magnificent, but the beauties it contains must be arranged, before it be possible to describe them. Amidst a variety of trifling objects you find there, some utensils in bronze, of as perfect purity and beauty as those of the cabinet of Portici, earthen vases of a most beautiful form, and very curious lamps. The Natural History too, which is likewise in bad order, contains many precious articles ; you discover every moment, in short, in this collection, as in all those belonging to Monks, that instinct of the ant which hoards together and piles up without selection, and with equal care the grain of corn, and the bit of useless wood : a fortunate instinct which formed the first cabinets, and has preserved us the treasures of antiquity of every kind !

The traveller should hear the organ in this immense convent, which is one of the finest in the world, and was lately built by a Neapolitan priest of the greatest merit in this branch.

The tones of all sorts of wind and strung instruments are imitated with the most perfect illusion. One of the pipes gives an echo in so aerial a manner, that you follow the sound to its distant reverberations, until it loses itself in space.

This ingenious priest has made harpsichords which do him no less honour; one, amongst others, the jacks of which strike the chords so forcibly, as to give as strong and as fine a sound as the stroke of a quill, without its squealing, and give the musician the power of producing *forte* or *piano*, by the degree of force he chuses to employ in touching the key. This harpsichord is susceptible of several tones, and particularly that of the harp, which is perfect; it has this advantage too, that by wearing the chords less, it is seldom out of tune. Another invention not less happy, is the power of lowering or heightening the tone a whole diapason at once, by the subtraction or augmentation of a lift, thus obviating the inconvenience to which this instrument was subject, of compelling voices to accommodate themselves to its tone.

I next visited the garden, which may be said to be constructed on the lava. The walks

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are paved with enamelled bricks in mosaic, and the flower beds are bordered with free stone. This sort of garden resembles not a little those salvers we see on desert tables, and is more calculated for shew than pleasure. At the end of this garden you see the route of the lava of 1669, which, after filling up a morass that surrounded the walls of the city, by the pressure of its weight, formed a breach in them so considerable as to overthrow three hundred houses, and bury a part of the building of the ancient convent.

Whilst we were waiting for the uncovering of *Ætna*, I made a little excursion on the side of Iaci, to the port where Homer has placed the landing of Ulysses, and which still bears the name of *Porto d'Ulysse*. Homer made choice of a very miserable spot for the arrival of his hero, or else the lava with which it is enveloped has greatly changed its form. Virgil has been happier in the description he has given us of the landing of *Æneas* on the coast of the Cyclops. It seems as if he had described it from nature, for that passage of his poem is the very picture of the *Scogli d'Iaci*, near the castle of Iaci. These shoals, or rocks, which are one hundred French feet

above the level of the sea, and possibly as steep below it, are entirely masses of lava. It is as impossible to explain, as to conceive how these masses have become insulated with gulphs between them, of such profundity, as to make the water appear black as ink, though it be more limpid in this spot than I have ever seen it elsewhere. It was a perfect calm, and we made the tour of these rocks. The principal one is crossed horizontally by a grey lava, that here covers the black one of which the others are formed. There is reason to believe that this enormous lava proceeded from a volcano, the crater of which is distinguishable on the sea shore. But what cause can we imagine for its insulated situation, unless some dreadful convulsion of the earth have removed the sandy bottom on which this mass had run when liquid, have separated it from the shore, and formed from it these rocks. This opinion seems to be supported by the irregularity of their flakes. In one of these islands there is a stratum cleft in a vertical and parallel direction, as the giants causeway in Ireland is described to be. Upon the principal one, we found some ruins of a building, a reservoir of water and a grotto, which are probably the remains

mains of a castle, built like that of Iaci, on a rock of the same volcanic matter.

We returned to Catania. The weather had now cleared up, the mountain was uncovered, and the Canon Recupero, my guide and counsellor, informed me that now was the time to renew our expedition.

ÆTN A.

On the 22d of June, at eight in the morning, I left Catania. A very gentle north east wind suffered a transparent smoke to rise up from the crater of the mountain, which became distinct on the sky, and waving like the streamer of a vessel, disappeared at the distance of at least twenty leagues at sea. We continued advancing full of hope and courage. Scarcely had we got six miles however, before a small cloud began to form perpendicularly over the crater. This motionless point gave me some uneasiness. At length we reached Nicolosi, a populous village, but which to me appeared wretched, having the melancholy aspect inseparable from all buildings of lava. Here we took *Blas*, that cele-

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brated *cicerone* of Ætna recommended to me by the Canon, and known by the denomination of the Cyclops. The country we had passed through from Catania to Nicolosi, which is twelve miles, appeared to me neither so beautiful nor fertile as we had found it in the same region of the mountain on taking our departure from Giari. It does not exhibit that richness, and that abundance of the golden age, which covers that scene of ancient disasters with flowers and fruits. Here, where they are still so recent, the fatal effects of the volcano lie naked and exposed. On almost every side you see nothing but lava, scoriæ, cinders, destruction, and devastation ; and a few terraces, the fertility of which bears ample evidence of the value of the soil that has been covered. A mile beyond Nicolosi you come to the mountain called *Monte Roffo*, from whence flowed the lava of 1669, which reached Catania, and surrounded it. This volcano opened very near another extremely ancient one, at the same height, and now covered with vegetation. *Monte Roffo*, though formed above a century ago, seems to have ceased its eruption yesterday. Its crater is still

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of the colour of mortar, and all its invi-
rons are covered with ashes so hard baked,
as to be almost vitrified, and so abundant,
that the space of two miles diameter which
this volcano covered with its ashes, remains at
the present day without the slightest trace of
vegetation ; insomuch that in passing over it,
your mind presents to you the frightful image
you have formed of the sandy deserts of Arabia.
The melancholy colour of these grey cinders,
and the rounded forms of all the inequali-
ties of the ground, present such repose and
harmony to the eye, that the smallest object
becomes distinct, and you perceive a butterfly
at the distance of half a mile.

After Nicolosi you come to an hospital called *S. Nicolo dell' Arena*, formerly an infirmary, or country residence, whither the sick monks of the Benedictine convent repaired for their recovery. Farther westward, and higher up, the Norman conquerors had given them a de-
sert, where they made their first settlement, but driven from thence by the fire of *Ætna*, they took refuge at this hospital. Subsequent disasters compelling them to abandon this se-
cond retreat, they then built a large convent in Catania, which being destroyed likewise by

the last earthquake which overthrew that town, they built that in which they now reside. So that, from misfortune to misfortune, they are reduced to inhabit an immense palace, which would be a respectable monument, did but taste sometimes preside in the choice these monks make of the artists they employ. At *S. Nicolo dell' Arena*, however, we met with all the frugality that distinguished the ancient Genobites; four eggs amongst eight of us! We set off at four in the afternoon. The wind had shifted from the westward, and the atmosphere was thickened; our cloud, which seemed to fwell with the smoke of *Etna*, had become very large, with the concave form of a buckler, which covered the whole summit of the mountain.

I began already to feel melancholy. We traversed the forest, which serves as a girdle to the mountain, and seems to establish a line of demarcation between one region and the other. I met with none of those chesnut trees I had seen on the other side; but large crooked oaks, and ash trees, instead of firs and birches. Different currents of lava have overturned this forest in many places. Here we have the best opportunity of observing

serving the various effects of these torrents of fire in their progress. In some places they have overturned monstrous trees, and spared very small ones, leaving them insulated without touching them; in other places they have set fire to a tree at fifty paces distance, and close to it have only singed the bark of another, without injuring it. These phenomena may be explained by the nature of the lava, which, as soon as it arrives at some distance from the mouth of the volcano, becomes loaded with scoriæ, a sort of bitumen, which being of a lighter nature; floats at the top, becomes inflated with air, cools, and is broken by the motion of the fluid underneath. This fluid continues to run, and hurries along with noise this cooled scum, which when heaped up in certain places, changes the direction of the current, or when thrown off on either side, falls against the trees or houses, without setting fire to them, as the real matter of the lava would have done, which being more weighty, more fluid, and retaining an extreme degree of heat, forms itself a bed, and sometimes spreads the conflagration long before it has manifested its appearance.

After

After traversing the region of the forest, which is seven miles, we arrived at the grotto of the goats, formed out of the crust of a bubble of the scoriae. But let not the reader's imagination run astray, and suppose it the cave of Polyphemus, to which it bears no more resemblance than our conductor to a Cyclops. Nothing can be more wretched than this retreat ; it will scarcely contain six persons. It was so low as not to admit of our standing upright.

The wind was become stronger, and still freshened at the setting sun. Notwithstanding this put our *cicerone* out of humour, I was not aware of the consequences, but delighted at seeing it carry off the clouds ; we supped with great gaiety, and waited impatiently for the hour of our departure, amidst the smoke of a large fire made of the trees we had felled on the occasion. Our conductor, in consequence of our solicitations, again began to proceed at eleven at night, which was an hour too soon. The wind still continuing to increase, did not allow us long to march by torch-light, and we found ourselves enveloped in the darkest night, obliged to keep close together.

together, and halloo to each other at every winding of the path. One of our company dropped his cloak, which it was impossible to recover, and another had nearly lost his horse by alighting from it a single moment. Thus did we continue climbing for eight miles, by a road which indeed is neither hard nor rugged, but very winding, and intersected by dangerous ravines, which we avoided by the wonderful dexterity of our guide.

We had already passed several heaps of eternal snow, and the cold was become extremely sharp, when we arrived at the platform, at that terrible ancient crater, which is three miles in diameter. Within this diameter, three mountains or volcanoes are formed, and from the mouth of the middle one, which is loftier than the others, proceeds a perpetual exhalation of vapours from this eternal fire. I never shall forget the impression I felt on approaching this most awful spot, which seems proscribed to mortals, and absolutely devoted to the infernal deities. Here nature seems totally reversed; no vegetation, not the motion of a living creature to disturb the frightful silence of the night; every thing is dead, or rather nothing has

has yet begun to live ; nothing is combined on this dreary waste, it is the chaos of the elements. An æthereal air which oppresses you, shakes your very existence, and awakens you to one which warns man that he is out of the region to which his organs enslave him. You scarce become sensible of your temerity ; you think you have entered into the laboratory of nature to steal her secrets, and while you shudder at the attempt, experience a secret pride at the courage that inspired you with such hardiness. This plain, in short, appeared to me a sanctuary, and the livid flame, which served us as a light-house, the principle of fire itself, which, more ancient than the world, bestowed on it its life and movement. The fiery vapours emitted from the crater constituted the only glimmering that enlightens this immense space, in a manner wonderful beyond description^a. When we were in the middle of

^a Had *Milton* visited mount *Ætna*, could he have more happily painted this scene of sublimity and horror, than in the following passage of his *Paradise Lost* ;

Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful !

TRANSLATOR.

the

the platform, the fire changed into a torrent of smoke. The moon now rising threw a fresh colouring over the waste, and changed its aspect in a manner absolutely different, but not less terrible ; every thing seemed prepared for the gloomy mysteries of Hecate. Day-light was yet too far off ; our horses, which sunk mid-leg deep into the ashes, could no longer either walk or breathe, and the cold was continually increasing. We halted therefore against a large rock of lava, the only prominent object we discovered on the plain. We took shelter under it, burying ourselves in the sand, and piling it up round us to keep us warm : we had recourse likewise to our brandy bottle, the effect of which would have been to throw us into a sleep, that might have proved fatal, had we not been cautioned against it. After an hour's repose, we again set out : the silvery dawn announced the day, and the obscurity of the night no longer existed to us, whilst the whole earth was yet in darkness.

We had quitted our horses, and the wind now blew a hurricane. On reaching the foot of the last mountain, our Cyclops apprized us that it would be a fruitless enterprize to attempt to ascend it, but I was desirous of trying,

ing, and still kept clambering, when he again endeavoured to prevent us. We were all animated however by the same courage, so that our guide was obliged to follow us, muttering observations which we could neither understand, nor were inclined to listen to. If the rest of the mountain be easy of ascent, this part of it is altogether as difficult, nay, almost impracticable. It is nothing but a heap of scoriæ thrown out of the crater, and calcined to such a degree as to be without solidity ; they sink down as you tread on them, crumble under your feet, which they cut with their acute angles, and with difficulty suffer you to advance a few inches by crawling on your hands to avoid falling and wounding yourself in the fall. Nor was this the only obstacle we had to overcome ; our eye-lids were wounded by a volatile dust. This dust mingled with the smoke, is hurried away by the wind, and often conveyed into Calabria, and, in great eruptions, is known to fall even at Malta. The smoke which continually increased, began likewise to oppress us. We were stopped quite short, and nearly suffocated by it at three hundred fathoms from the summit, and had no other resource but to throw ourselves on the

the ground, and descend again as quick as possible about fifty fathoms, to a spot where we stopt and took our breath for a few moments. We now made a second attempt by turning round the mountain to attain its summit to the windward ; but we had scarcely gained the wind, when we found it so violent, that the weight of our bodies was no longer sufficient to resist it ; so that it was impossible for us to lift up a leg without the risque of being thrown down, and being precipitated down the declivity.

It was near fun-rise, and we were about to lose the object of our curiosity by struggling in vain against an insurmountable obstacle. We returned therefore to the leeward, where in spite of the shelter and the hot smoke which covered us, we trembled with cold, and were enveloped in a sulphureous and fetid vapour. It was through this vapour that we got an indifferent sight of the rising of the sun, without being able to distinguish any object on that side ; but as soon as it had acquired some elevation, we discovered very plainly, to the westward, the shadow of Ætna projecting over all that part of Sicily, and keeping it still in darkness. As this shadow

shortened

shortened with the rising of the sun above the horizon, we enjoyed by degrees an extent of view, which no mountain in the whole world but Ætna, from its excessive height, and insulated situation can afford. Other mountains of the same height being always attached to a long chain, the prospects from them are obstructed by the lower ones with which they are surrounded, and their bases are concealed from the sight. The whole coasts of the island seem to compose the basis of the mountain. We imagined we saw Malta, which could only be distinguishable by persons well acquainted with its position; but we discovered very distinctly the whole country from the mountains of Palermo as far as Iaci, that is to say, Mount Eryx, Trapani, the whole southern coast, and the sea to a very great distance, Capo Passalo or Pachynum, Syracuse, Augusta, Lake of Lentini, the rich plain of Leontium, and the summits of the mountains undulated like the waves. On the side of the Adriatic we saw an immense extent of sea, but no distinct object, and nothing of Italy, or the isles of Lipari, which were hid from us by the smoke. Notwithstanding our anxiety to take drawings, our organs refused to do their office,

and

and I am persuaded that the execution of such a design, will prove at all times beyond the reach of human powers: yet it would be highly interesting to be able to take this boundless landscape, and the relative distances of such a variety of objects; with a bird's eye view of those innumerable volcānoes which resemble so many *barrows* of various shapes, more or less laden with productions, in proportion to the antiquity of their eruptions; and of those immense lavas which have flowed from their summits to the sea, and whose congealed form still retains the appearance of torrents.

From one object to another, our attention at length turned upon ourselves, and we were frightened at the metamorphosis of our figures, so strangely were we disguised. We descended from the hill we had last mounted, with considerable difficulty and danger, thoroughly convinced that few persons make the attempt; a belief we were confirmed in by our cyclops, who was as much fatigued as ourselves, and assured us that it was customary to ascend no higher than the *philosopher's tower*, which the night had prevented us from observing, and where our horses were sent to wait for us. This celebrated tower, the subject of so many differ-

F tations,

tations, and which is attributed by vulgar tradition to Empedocles, who, wishing to analyze this sublime phœnomenon, built himself an observatory there, is now no more than a shapeless fabrick, which the sands, shifting with the whirlwinds, alternately cover and expose. When we saw it, it was two feet above ground, but what did appear, was so ruined, that it was impossible to make out the plan of it. We could only discover that its external form was square, and its interior oval: observations which can throw but little light on the structure and purpose of this edifice. Some are of opinion that it was a watch tower; but this idea is absurd, since it could have been habitable only three months in the year, and of these three months, signals could not have been visible from it above fifteen days at the most; besides, that it could have been seldom used as a dwelling, from the intensity of the cold, the difficulty of conveying provisions, and of keeping up a fire. If considered as a tomb, it must have originated in a strange whim indeed. The most natural conjecture is, that it was an observatory, to place instruments under shelter from the weather. We observed that the building was in
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the Roman style, that is to say, alternately constructed of a layer of bricks, and another of rubble stones ; and that it was cased with white marble, of which we brought away some specimens.^a

Reflecting on this magnificence, so useless to the arts, and so little in the taste of a philosopher, the recollection of the Emperor Adrian's expedition hither, occurred to me, and led me to conjecture that this retreat was perhaps constructed for him, when, on his return from Egypt, he wished to see the sun rise on Ætna. Nor does any thing contradict this conjecture. In the year 877 of Rome, and 123 of Christ, the period of that Emperor, the crater was perhaps no higher, though you must now walk above a mile and a half farther to reach it, and a hundred fathoms are added to its perpendicular height.

We now determined to quit this tomb of the redoubted Enceladus, and remounted our horses, which were trembling every limb. In descending we traversed the whole country we had passed over in the dark, which is com-

^a A large pannel of it is still existing at Catania, on which there is a small moulding.

posed only of cinders and lava, unmixed with pumice; *Ætna* hardly ever emitting any. I feasted my eyes with this landscape, as a grand and unusual sight, which I could enjoy but once. Notwithstanding our horses were fatigued, the road is so safe, and so easy, that we soon arrived at the grotto. Here my curiosity being satisfied, I began to be sensible of the fatigue. We eat without appetite the remainder of our provisions, and I was so exhausted when I got on horseback, that I slept almost the whole way to Catania, where we arrived at three in the afternoon, in a heat as violent as the cold had been piercing on the mountain. This contrast, in the space of twelve hours, is so extraordinary, that it always leaves the impression of a dream on those who experience it.

CATANIA.

We now revisited the antiquities of Catania. In the garden of the reformed Franciscans, we saw two tombs, one of which was square, and of a very solid construction; and it may be conjectured, from the thickness of its walls, has supported a pyramid. Its style of building in

mattoni

mattoni and stones, and its interior decorations of niches, give it the air of a Roman structure. This shapeless ruin did not appear worthy of a drawing; but in the same garden there is another of a circular form, of the same construction with the other, but in better preservation, still retaining its coating of stucco, and embellished with pilasters which project but little, and with a small cornice. The cypresses which surround it, give it at this day all the character of its ancient appropriation. We took a sketch of it, which is truly picturesque. The inside of this tomb is square with niches: above is a rounded platform, on which probably rested a statue or cinerary urn. All this quarter, which was out of the city, has been consecrated to tombs; and whenever the earth is dug up or ploughed in the environs, the vestiges of burying places are discovered, but totally in ruins.

In the middle of this convent is a well, on which you see a piece of sculpture in *arabesque* of Caggini, a Sicilian sculptor of the 15th century. This piece has all the beauty, the finish, and elegance of the antique of the same species. I saw likewise in one of the chapels of the church, a marble bust of a bishop, of

the family of Paderno, by the same artist, which proves him to have possessed the highest merit of several kinds. From hence we went to the shaft of a well, where water has been sought for under the lava of 1669, at the depth of forty feet. This excavation is both curious and picturesque, as it has discovered the ancient walls of the city. They were in search of a spring which was known to have flowed at the foot of this wall, which was recovered, still running on the sand, over a lava of more ancient date. Near this, in a court yard, is the excavation of a bath and stew, belonging to a private house, executed at the expense of the Prince de Biscaris.

I am of opinion that it would be no difficult matter to make a proper distinction among the antiquities of Catania, and to assign to each age what belongs to it, by attributing to the Greeks the temple of Ceres, the great theatre, and the small one; and in this we shall concur with the history of that time, which speaks of these three monuments, and tells us, that Alcibiades, in his expedition, harangued the people in the little theatre; which proves that there were two. The amphitheatre, the nau-machia, the gymnasium, and the grand aqueduct,

duct, we may ascribe to the Roman colony, as we know that these buildings were more agreeable to the taste and manners of that people than to those of the Greeks, who were strangers to them till their conquest by the former; besides that the building in stone and brick, is entirely in the Roman style. The baths which were enlarged, decorated and repaired, for a long series of years, are of the period of the lower empire, the workmanship and style of which are discoverable in the mosaics found near the Convent of the Benedictines.

After this distribution, we shall be less astonished at the extraordinary number of large edifices, in a city which was never so considerable as it is this day, and which, if it follows the same progression of population that has marked its increase since the earthquake of 1673, will become at the end of a century the largest and richest town in Sicily. The earthquake left sixteen thousand inhabitants: it is now sixty years since the rebuilding of the city was begun, and the population is already estimated at sixty-six thousand souls, with an university, an academy, manufactures, wealth,

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and commerce, though it has neither a port or highways.

ENNA, or CASTRO GIOVANI,

The festival of Saint Rosalia being to commence the 10th of July at Palermo, we had not time to visit Syracuse, Malta, and the southern coast in the interval ; we therefore changed our route, and resolved to begin with the interior parts of the island, which we had intended to defer till our return from that expedition. We quitted Catania therefore with an intention of returning thither, and pursued our journey by *Paterno, Centorbi, Castro Giovanni, Termini* and *Palermo*. Our original guides, who were unacquainted with this route, and knew that we intended leaving them at Palermo, got the start of us, and left us at Catania, where we hired others, who were better informed. We took only one *Cambieri* instead of two, which though it left us one folly the less, was yet one too much, for these fellows cost you the price of two horses, and are not of the smallest use ; in the present case however, it was a matter of necessity, he being the owner of the horses, which he would not have

have let to us, but on that condition. At five in the morning we left Catania, and pursuing our journey between the base of *Ætna*, and the plain of Lentini, we found at six miles distance, at the little village of *Misterbianco*, built on the lava, the ruins of a bath, excavated likewise by the Prince de Biscaris, who, not limiting his researches to Catania alone, has sought after and procured drawings of every thing that may serve for the history of the environs of *Ætna*. These baths, according to all appearance, belonged to a villa, or country house; for we do not know that any town existed on this spot, and this is the only remains of antiquity to be found here. What is left consists of a few chambers of different forms, all of them small, but not destitute of magnificence; for I found, in several places, the remains of a marble coating. The whole was an appurtenance to a larger edifice, some fragments of the walls of which, and a reservoir, which doubtless furnished the baths with water, are still visible. On the whole, this ruin is but an indifferent structure of lava, mixed with *mattoni*. To the left of the road we found an aqueduct, which is said to have conveyed the water from Paderno to Catania;

and

and stones, circularly pierced, which served as channels to the aqueduct, are found in the neighbourhood.

Two miles further on, you leave *la Motta* to the left, and traverse *Malepazzo*, a village entirely ruined, either by an earthquake, or the unwholesomeness of the air that prevails there almost throughout the year. And in fact, nothing can give you more strongly the idea of the plague, than this abandoned village, which contains a number of black buildings, of the colour of the lava, streets traced out, and not a roof, or an inhabitant: here terminates the second branch of the lava of the eruption of 1669. Four miles off is *Paterno*, the ancient *Hybla major*, ruined by the Saracens, who built a castle there, upon an ancient crater. The Normans erected a new building on the foundations of this ruined castle. The two different styles of architecture are still distinguishable. This castle serves at present as a vast prison for a few prisoners, among whom we were admitted through a small gate, with a recommendation to take care of our weapons. We lost no time in hurrying through this sad abode.

The inhabitants, who had built formerly in
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the environs of this tower, have quitted that incommodious situation for the ancient site of the city, which, from its scattered ruins, appears to have occupied a vast space of ground. The abundance and variety of the waters had apparently given it celebrity, and induced the building of a great number of baths, the ruins of which are still to be discovered, but so effaced, as to render it impossible to draw one single interesting plan of them. To the westward of the city, you find, in the space of half a mile, three springs of water of different qualities; one very considerable one of soft water, which runs through and fertilizes the whole valley; another of salt water, which furnishes marine salt by the action of the sun on the surface of the soil over which it diffuses itself; and a third of a ferruginous quality, from the spring of which, so much air escapes, as to give it the appearance of boiling, though it be really cold. This last water, which was much used in cutaneous disorders, deposits a very copious rust upon the sand over which it flows, and on the herbs it moistens in its passage. The marble facings, the fragments of which are still to be found in the ruins of these baths, evince their ancient magnificence, and

and the purposes for which they were designed. At present all these waters are intermingled, and lost, and cause the pestilential air of Paterno, which contains nevertheless a population of from ten to twelve thousand souls. I found, on one of the stones in the wall of the church of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the following Greek inscription, engraved on the lava, which might have been interesting had it been entire.

ΕΠΙ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ Π
ΠΟΛΙ ΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΚΟΙΠ
ΑΡΤΕΜΙΣΙΟΥ.

The remainder is broken. This fragment is thus explained:

“ Sub Dionysio fuit Polictates et sub Artemisio.”

After dining at the tavern, we set out for *Aderno*. Ten miles farther on, the road continues skirting along the base of *Ætna*, through the lava, in a rather barren country, planted with olives. After passing through *gli Greci*, a large village, two miles from *Aderno*, the ancient *Hadranum*, we arrived at the latter, just before night. Before we entered

entered the town, we discovered in the fields, to the right of the road, a ruin of indifferent structure, which might almost excite a doubt of its antiquity, did not this country abound with many of the same construction. There is reason to believe it to have been a tomb.

The entrance of *Aderno* seems to promise a large city by the grandeur and magnificence of the buildings, which are almost all churches or convents. There is a large castle here built by the Normans, in a tolerably picturesque style. We slept at the convent of the Capuchins, where a Canon, who was equally obliging and well informed of the history of his country, came to propose to conduct us the next day to see the antiquities, scattered in the environs of the modern town. He first led us to the temple of Mars, without the limits both of the ancient and modern cities. This temple was dedicated in the times of Christianity to St. John, was afterwards abandoned through superstition, and is now ruined by time; yet not so completely as to prevent us from forming a distinct idea of the plan, construction, and even of the decorations, which were simple,

simple, and in a good style. The building was of lava, mixed with *mattoni*, and doubtless covered with stucco. In front of the gate you see the porch of a peristyle crowned by a pediment; but there are no remains of any columns.

Near to this are the ruins of a large square tomb, raised on steps, with a subterraneous vault. This edifice is so ruined, and covered with ivy, that it has no longer the appearance of any thing but a tuft of verdure. We next went in search of the famous temple of *Adrano*, and found the remains of a large building, supposed to be the foundation of this temple, which was overthrown by a lava; and in fact this ruin has been choaked and overwhelmed by this terrible matter, which has pushed forward and deranged the layers of that part of it which remains, though the stones were of an enormous size, and placed in a flanting direction against the current of the lava.

This temple gave the name to the city built by Dionysius in the fourth year of the 94th Olympiad, 400 years before Christ, when he had destroyed the fortifications of Catana, and given its territory to the Campanians.

panians. It eventually served as a retreat for the expelled inhabitants of Catana, who sent their wives and children thither on the approach of the enemy to their walls. This city flatters itself with being that *Ætna* pretended to be built by Dionysius, and founds its pretensions on some medals discovered at Aderno, with this inscription; but these were of the number of those struck by the Campanians, when Dionysius put them in possession of Catana, and changed its name to *Ætna*, which it bore until the days of Timoleon, who restored it to its proper inhabitants, 339 years before Christ, in the 2d year of the 110th Olympiad. Beyond this temple we discovered the walls of the city. These ancient walls, built in the Gre- cian style, are lined with enormous masses of lava laid without mortar. They are eight feet and a half thick. You follow the traces of them almost without interruption to the opposite walls; which gives the circumference of the ancient city, which was not con- siderable. A small river ran formerly under these walls, which being absorbed in its source by the great lava that entered the town, has formed, apparently, that multitude of gush- ing

ing springs to be found every where in its environs, and fertilize the territory, which abounds in fruits, mulberry-trees, and all sorts of gardens. The modern town, notwithstanding the great number of monasteries, still contains ten thousand inhabitants. The principal church is built in a tolerable handsome style, with columns of lava, which produce a very fine effect. Etruscan vases and coins are found here. But the Prince de Biscaris has exhausted every thing. I met only with one, which the possessor would neither give, nor sell me; on one of the faces was a crab, and on the reverse an eagle, knocking down a hare, with this Grecian legend, ΑΔΑΠΑΝΙΩΝ. There are others with the head of Apollo, and his lyre on the reverse, with the same legend.

We left *Aderno* at five o'clock, and descending five miles, at length arrived at the foot of *Etna*, at the river *Regalbuto*, which you cross on a bridge upwards of five hundred paces in length, over which is an aqueduct that collects all the waters of *Aderno*, and conveys them from one terrace to another, crossing over the valley upwards of one hundred and twenty feet above the level of the river. This aqueduct

duct has twenty-nine large, and forty-seven smaller arches. This royal expenditure is due likewise to the munificence of the Prince de Biscaris, who, by giving a bridge to the public, has created for himself an estate, which from wanting water, and remaining uncultivated, is now covered with the richest harvests, and abundant rivers. We left *Carcaci* on the right, and passed over another river which falls into the *Regalbuto*, at a little distance below the bridge. Here you cease to travel on the lava, and begin to find other stone, and ascend in a direction opposite to *Ætna*.

We mounted by a most steep and perilous road to reach *Centorbi*, the ancient *Centuripæ*, a city mentioned by Cicero in his oration against Verres. This city is situated on five points of rocks, and is in the shape of a star-fish. Never was there a town more incommodious to approach, or to inhabit. Yet it was very populous in the time of the Romans: but it retains nothing of its ancient splendor, but a few wretched ruins. Its long suburbs, terminated in a point, are miserable and depopulated; it is unfrequented, without money, without commerce, and without roads. Our arrival was there considered as an event

of importance. We alighted at the reformed Augustines, a large convent as much depopulated as the town. Scarcely had we entered the court, before I was surrounded by all the nobility of the country, who, little accustomed to new faces, and to hear any other language but Sicilian, were unable to comprehend the tongue I spoke in. They asked me if I was an Italian, and on our telling them we were French, seemed struck with astonishment: they did not give us time to answer their questions. They were obliged to enter by detachments into the cell I was to lodge in, which was too small to contain the number of the curious, who did not quit the corridor, till they had appointed a rendezvous for the next day. I escaped however from the audience by going out at day break.

We first descended into the valley to the westward of the town, where we found very considerable ruins of baths, built with beautiful *mattoni*, lined with marble in the manner of the Romans, and exactly in the style of those of Baiæ. Five great arches remain, forming niches, which have evidently been ornamented with pedestals and statues. We still find some remains of the marble coating, with

fragments

fragments of walls, which formed the apartments now destroyed by the waters, that have hollowed out a channel, and carried away the building to the very foundation. This is all we discovered really interesting. Nothing more is to be seen but some ruinous buildings of no consequence, destitute both of style and character. A fragment of the wall, with buttress arches, probably once supported a causeway, by which it was possible formerly to pass from one extremity of the city to the other, without being under the necessity, as at present, of constantly returning to the centre. We found in a well built cellar of beautiful *mattoni*, niches in the sides in the form of a basin, cut out of the stone, of which we never could divine the use. To the eastward is a ruin of a wretched castle, called the castle of Conradin. Frederic, the grandfather of this Conradin, destroyed Centorbi about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and demolished it to its very foundations: it appears to have been rebuilt with the castle, for, in 1268, after the defeat of Conradin, Conrad Capetius aspiring to become king of Sicily, finding himself abandoned by the Sicilians, who declared for Charles of Anjou, shut himself up in

this fortrefs. Montfort, who having forced him to surrender, put out his eyes, afterwards hanged him, and again destroyed the city. From these events perhaps, the present ruin has been called the castle of Conradin, by a mistake originating in the similiarity of the two names.

A greater number of gold and silver coins, precious stones of every kind, vases, statues, cinerary urns, &c. have been found at Centorbi, than in any other place in Sicily. A considerable part of the riches of the museum of the Prince of Biscaris, has been furnished by this town.

The number of inhabitants in this ancient and large city, is now reduced to three thousand, who are very poor and wretched. The neighbouring country, planted chiefly with vineyards, produces an indifferent wine; and there are soft rocks of an imperfect free-stone, mixed with a marine tufa, even to the top of the mountain. In one of the squares of the town, I observed the foil was formed of marine concretions, mixed with shells. On digging, there are found under the vegetable earth, the tufa, with these concretions, the gritty stone I have spoken of; and still lower, scoriæ, and lava,

Java, beneath which is a fresh bed of grit. Were we to penetrate still farther, we should no doubt find the lava, which forms the basis of the mountain. What changes in the globe we inhabit? does not this arrangement of the materials that compose it demonstrate, how great must be the antiquity of the volcano that has produced this lava, which probably is covered with marine concretions, to the depth of six hundred feet below the present level of the sea!

Descending from Centorbi, by a road no less dangerous than that by which we had ascended, we traversed a great extent of country, already burnt up by the sun, destitute of trees, and where the mountains, whose multiplied summits might be discovered at a great distance, resemble the waves of an agitated sea. After a journey of nine miles, we came to the superb village of Regalbuto, situated on an eminence, and no less opulent in its appearance, than the prospect with which it presents the traveller, is pleasing and picturesque. Here the country changes, and becomes verdant, being covered with, and abounding in all sorts of vegetable productions, as far as S. Filippo d'Argiro, the ancient Argyrium, and birth

place of the celebrated historian, Diodorus Siculus. This city, built on the point of a rock, of a conical form, commands its whole territory, which, according to history, disputed the palm with that of Syracuse, in point of extent and richness. We arrived so late, that the rocks appeared to us like so many houses, and an illumination that was making for the festival of St. Peter, gave all the houses the air of palaces, so that it appeared to us in its ancient splendor; such as Diodorus represents it, when Timoleon, after having expelled the tyrants of Sicily, encouraged and increased its population. Enriched by commerce, the inhabitants who came to reside here, embellished it with superb edifices: they built a theatre, almost as large and splendid as that of Syracuse, and erected magnificent mausolea in the form of pyramids. Yet notwithstanding all the splendor of this once proud city, which, at the moment of our arrival, resounded on all sides with fire-works and pateraroes, in honour of the holy sacrament, we should have slept in the street, but for the charity of the Franciscans, our daily resource. The illusion was dissipated with the night, and our friars,

miserable

miserable as they were, appeared to us nearly the grandest people of the city.

We climbed among the houses, for the winding and steep paths, which are in lieu of streets, do not deserve that name, and arrived, by means of them, at the top of the mountain, where we found nothing remaining but the great walls of a castle, built by the Saracens. We sought after the temple of Hercules, and the lake dug there by Iolas, his son-in-law. The spot where it formerly existed, was pointed out to us, in a low situation, between the Franciscan convent and the city ; it is still called the *Lago d'Ercole*. Historians relate, that the ancient Argyrians cut off their hair to sacrifice it to Hercules, in token of gratitude for the water with which that hero furnished them by means of this lake, Argyrium before being entirely destitute of water. Whether it be from tradition, or for their greater convenience, the modern inhabitants still cut their hair almost entirely off, preserving only two locks upon their temples. It must be acknowledged to be a circumstance not a little curious, should they be found to have retained this custom near three thousand years, that have elapsed since they first made the sacrifice, the

memory of which is preserved by the medals of the time, which bear on one side a genius, cutting the locks of an Argyrian, and on the other, the head of Hercules.

Yet notwithstanding the surface of the ancient Argyrium be so totally despoiled, it may still boast the fertility of its soil, which, throughout the whole district, would still teem with every thing, were it cultivated, and once more enrich the inhabitants, had they but a sale for their productions. Besides those common to other parts of Sicily, the territory of this town has some articles peculiar to itself; such as saffron, which grows wild here, and when cultivated, is of the first quality, and bears the highest price. A kind of potter's earth is also found here, of so unctuous a nature, as to serve the inhabitants instead of sope, the effect of which it perfectly produces, with all its detergent qualities. Were proper researches made, the earth would certainly not prove ungrateful in antiquities; for the peasants, while following their ordinary labours, frequently find a number of engraved stones, and cameos. During my stay, I became acquainted with D. Pietro Minco, provost of the collegiate church, who has made a collection of them, in

in which there are some of the very first beauty; amongst others is a sardonyx, an intaglio, representing a faun playing with a goat, beautifully executed, and finished in as perfect a style as any I ever saw of the kind. He has also some Greek vases, found in some burial places in which, after the ancient Grecian manner, the bodies were buried, and not burnt. He gave me likewise some essence congealed by time, something like sope, the residue perhaps of the natural oil they were accustomed to place in little vases beside the bodies, and some almonds found in the same manner, having the colour and appearance of charcoal, like those of Pompeii. This learned canon, the only one possibly at Argyrium, who ever thought of acquiring knowledge, shewed me his library, to which he has added above two thousand pounds worth of the best books in every language. He was so kind as to promise me some remarks he has made on the country, and to make further researches, in order to render them still more interesting. He likewise sent me a bottle of Greek wine, which he assured me was made from grapes of his own growth, after a method prescribed by Hesiod. This wine was exceedingly good, though

though still very brisk, and bore no resemblance to that of the country ; so true is it, that the mode of making wine effects wonders in its quality : a remark which may serve as an important lesson to the Italians.

Before I left Argyrium, I returned once more to the lake ; I observed the soil with fresh attention, and discovered some fragments of walls, at the level of the foundations, built with large blocks of free stone. Under the dust I found a flat floor, and some pieces of Mosaic, which must have been the remains of a large edifice. Not far from this, I was conducted to the house of an old Abbé, who while digging in his garden, had found a pedestal, with the following Greek inscription, ΔΙΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΥ, and several tombs with earthen vases, and entire bodies : which seem to indicate that this place was without the city, that the floor and Mosaic work I had just discovered, might be the remains of a temple, and that this temple, from its vicinity to the lake of Hercules, might be that erected by the inhabitants of Argyrium, in honour of that hero. All this however is nothing but conjecture, and conjecture which has no better foundation than these ruins ; but we must make

make the best we can of antiquities three thousand years old.

I was next shewn some houses built on the foundations of the ancient walls, and observed the form given by these walls to the city, which was shut in, and confined at the foot of the steep part of the mountain, and consequently built in a very incommodious manner. Argyrium was founded by the Sicanians, who came into Sicily from Spain. Harrassed in their possessions by the Lestrigons and Cyclops, gigantic and savage nations, they were compelled to abandon the rich plains of Leontium, and defend themselves by retiring to situations fortified by nature, which no doubt induced them to make choice of Argyrium. Thus, in different ages and countries, the weakness of the inhabitants has been the origin of all the cities built on the summits of mountains, where even the supply of provisions is a fatigue, requiring a great expense of time, and the labour of men and animals, and is, in fact, one of the chief causes of that negligence and misery, which renders many of the towns of Italy so dirty and neglected. All the castles of the Saracens, which we see hanging on lofty cliffs, have been erected there on the same

same principle. That torrent of barbarians, who ravaged Europe, unable to occupy the country they had despoiled, and perpetually in a state of war, were obliged to build fortresses in haste, and wanting numbers to leave in them strong garrisons, placed their castles so as to be capable of being defended by a few men, and give them the command of the country, which they could retain in subjection only by the fear of sudden descents, and the terror of unexpected sallies.

When visiting the churches, we found only one picture in the cathedral, which we took to be by Perugini from the minuteness of the execution, and the air of the heads, but it was of an easier and freer touch than was customary with that painter.

We set out at four in the afternoon, and proceeded through a fine country, and by a pretty good road to Leon-forte, ten miles from Argiro. Leon-forte is one of the largest and handsomest towns in Sicily, built on an eminence, at the bottom of which is a great variety of plants, which adorn and enrich the district. We took up our lodgings with the capuchins, in a convent as populous as the town. In the church of this convent the

traveller

traveller should see a superb painter by *Morealese*. This painter, but little known out of Sicily, may rank with the first artists of Italy, for boldness of design, freedom of pencil, force of expression, minute accuracy, and the grand effect of his draperies. He would be perhaps preferable to Spagnoletto, whom he most resembles in his manner, did he but equal his colouring.

The number of inhabitants in *Leon-forte*, though built only in the last century, amounts already to twelve thousand. The beauty of its territory seemed to me a foretaste of the delicious country I was about to find, on approaching *Enna*, and induced me to hasten my departure.

CASTRO GIOVANI, OR ENNA.

We left *Leon-forte* early in the morning, and after six miles travelling, began to ascend, and continued to do so for six more to reach the height of *Castro Giovani*, the *Enna* of antiquity, and the most ancient known city of Sicily, the capital of the kingdom of Ceres, that queen so justly honoured with a place among the immortals, for bestowing on mankind

kind the art of tillage : a city whose origin is lost in the obscurity of ages, and celebrated in the history of the heroic periods ; whose fields, as that history tells, were so delicious, that Diana and Minerva came to inhabit them during six months of the year. Copious streams of water formed tranquil lakes, whose verdant borders were perpetually enamelled with the delightful flowers of the meadows, where Pluto came to ravish Proserpine amidst her nymphs employed in forming garlands. This country, which the description of the poets has rendered enchanting to the imagination, appeared to me so melancholy, that I could not help thinking, that the delicious part of it was what the town concealed from me. *Castro Giovani* is built on a high flat ground, of steep ascent. Houses placed on rocks hewn in the form of grottoes, from whence the materials have been taken for the buildings, and which succeed to them when destroyed by time, present a most hideous prospect from without ; and within, nothing is found but depopulated streets, wretched and poor inhabitants, and a few deserted houses. I was recommended to an Abbé, who lodged us in the convent formerly occupied by the Jesuits, and was in hopes of finding

finding the antiquities I had been told of, and which I was assured were on the very spot. They talked to me of the palace of Ceres, and her temple, and I was on fire to visit these edifices, and to form an idea of the architecture of that period. We ran therefore to the castle, and found large old walls with battlements, lofty square towers, and Gothic gateways; in a word, a castle of the Normans, or at the most, of Saracenic origin; a castle, however, exceedingly well placed, for being in the centre of the island, and in a very elevated situation, it has a view of, and commands, a great part of it.

The war of the slaves, in which an unarmed banditti held out for a long time against the Roman armies, is a proof of the advantageous position of this castle, which is very spacious, and extremely well built. To turn this situation to double profit, and defend the approach to its walls, they have hewn out of the rock, at the foot of these very walls, the stones made use of in building it, which has formed new fortifications, by detaching, as I may say, and cutting perpendicularly the rock on which it stands. This castle was connected with a second rock, by a wall now

in

in ruins, which our conductors assured us was antique, but which is of the same period, and of the same workmanship with the walls of the fortification. It is true, that if there be not a temple on this second rock, it is impossible to imagine a more inviting situation for one, it is traced out by the form of the rock itself, and the draughtsman's eye beholds one, though it has no existence. Yet as we were in search of truth, we were obliged to confess, with regret, we could discover no such edifice. We returned in a melancholy mood, agreeing, however, that it must be somewhat difficult for any structure to resist the attacks of so many ages as have elapsed since the reign of the daughter of Saturn to our time: but, like *Maitre Guillaume*, in the *Avocat Patelin*, At least, said we, we shall find the lake, the grotto of Pluto, and the delicious meadow: monuments crumble into ruins, but nature is more constant in her productions. Our antiquary also gave us the most positive assurances, that both the grotto and the lake were still to be seen.

We set out full of hope, that we might be able to delineate from nature, a scene which has given such frequent employment to the imagination of the poets. We descended for three

three miles, without perceiving the least change in the face of the country, and began to think that Proserpine had rambled a little too far from home, not to suspect her of being in the plot. We first got sight of a large and disagreeable valley, and next entered a smaller one, where we found no other fountain than a few muddy little rivulets, and at length the lake, still called the lake of Proserpine, which is a large morass, four miles in circumference, without groves, or meadows, or shade, or flowery banks, fit for a nymph to walk on ; but with barren and gloomy borders, full of water reeds, enormous toads, and in a noxious air, which renders its approach near it dangerous, and sleep mortal. We saw no grotto, but little square holes eight or ten feet deep, from which stones have been dug, to build some neighbouring huts. Our disappointment was inexpressible, at finding that the imagination of the poets had done all, and that nature had not so much as afforded the least assistance. We returned not a little chagrined at the ill success of our researches, and I had now but one hope left to console me.

I had been promised some medals and Greek vases, and waited on the person whom I supposed

fed to be the fortunate possessor of them ; but he shewed me nothing but a Spanish coin of Philip II. and an old dish, on which a coat of arms had been enamelled. I was unable to express my astonishment at the knowledge of the inhabitants of Enna. In the course of conversation, our antiquary talked of gunpowder, made use of *before the incarnation* ; and a moment after passing to modern times, he archly asked me whether Louis XIV. was still fond of women, since the wound he had received with a knife. I determined to make the experiment, whether he would succeed better in his answers, than his questions, and inquired of him, what was the reason of the present depopulation of *Castro Giovani*, the number of inhabitants in which, in the best possible air, had, according to his own calculation, been reduced, within the space of a century, from sixty to twelve thousand ; he answered, that it was discouragement. Such reasons as these, the ringing of all the bells, and a constant and running fire from six or seven hundred swivels, which kept popping all the day, and were charged again as fast as fired, soon drove us from this *Enna*, so delicious in ancient

cient days, but which is now neither more nor less than simple *Castro Giovani*.^c

TERMINI.

We descended by a precipice rather than a road, by the side of *Calatacibetta*, a town built on another point of rock, very near that of *Castro Giovani*, but the descent and reascent of which, lengthens the distance to three miles. *Calatacibetta* appeared to me a poor

^c I was assured however, that a monk of real understanding and learning was to be found there; but he was too ill to receive company. I procured some questions to be proposed to him, concerning the etymology of the modern name of the town, and by what means it had been substituted for the ancient one. He replied, that *hanni*, or *janni*, in Arabic, signified fountains; that the great number of fountains in the town, had very probably procured it the name of *Castrum Hanni*, or city of fountains, which by corruption had become *Castro Giovani*. This etymology seems the more plausible, because *Castro Giovani* being on the most elevated central point of Sicily, (next to *Ætna*, which is at a great distance from it) it seems almost miraculous to find there so great a quantity of water flowing from all parts of the rock, and even from the highest point. I sent to inform the Monk, how much I regretted not having been able to see him, and he assured me in answer, that he would send to me at Catania, all the notes he possessed respecting the country.

and despicable place. After passing through its territory, we entered an uncultivated desert, in which is a hill of very fine white talc ; we then crossed a brackish rivulet, and passing by a small lake of black salt water, came to a whole mountain of fossile salt, which is worked like a stone quarry. The beds of salt, which are separated by a fine kind of potter's earth, are broken into quarters in the mine. The salt is as white as Parian marble. We picked out some specimens of it, of the transparency of rough chrystral. Some is found likewise which has a violet tincture, like virgin amethyst. The farm of this royal mine can produce but little ; we found no guards there, and a load of forty-five pounds weight is sold for nine-pence. When pounded, it is of a dazzling white, but rather of a corrosive tartness. Besides this quarry, are some springs which deposit a sediment, resembling snow. I know not whether it was the vicinity and exhalation of these saline earths, or the height of the ground, or both these causes, which gave a freshness to the air, but I found myself in a new climate, not only relatively to the impression of the moment, but with respect to the productions of nature, which were a month later

later in their growth. The corn was still green here, whilst the harvest had been long got in every where else. Proceeding a few miles further, we arrived at *Alimena*, after a day's journey of eighteen miles. *Alimena* is a large village, well built, and almost new. We took up our lodging, as usual, in the convent of the Capuchins, which is a very handsome building. The cloister, though not rich, is in a very pleasing style. This country is so entirely destitute of wood, that the inhabitants are obliged to heat their ovens with straw.

We set out before day break, and though it was the 2d of July, and we were in the 38th degree of latitude, we could not help complaining of the cold. We again entered the most melancholy deserts, where however the curious natural productions, and internal riches of the soil, might recompence an observer for the unwearyed and displeasing uniformity of the surface, which is covered only with thistles, and wild grasses. I thought I could distinguish here a great variety in the nature of the earths, and the principles of several minerals and different marbles. We travelled eighteen miles without seeing a house, or finding any tolerable prospect, as far as *Calatavuturo*, where

the country becomes as grand and sublime, as it had hitherto been disgusting. Perpendicular mountains, hanging rocks, glimpes of the sea, large vallies, and ancient castles, resembling those described in fairy tales ; every object here is magnificent, majestic, and awful. The invention of the greatest artist could have imagined nothing happier. It seems as if Salvator Rosa had himself formed and arranged the romantic scene, or that it had inspired him with the idea of his finest paintings.

Calatavuturo has nothing in its favour, but the grandeur of its environs, for in itself it is a wretched village. We quitted it to complete the eighteen remaining miles to Termini, and to finish our journey over the mountains of the *Nebrodes*. After winding amongst difficult vallies, the mountains open, the vale flattens, extends, and continues to the sea, with an imperceptible descent : a small river meanders through the plain, and dividing it, advances very gently to the sea, spreading itself over a delightful beach. Never was there a happier situation for a city. I wished to find *Himera* here, but did not now look for it, having been misled by M. D'Anville's map, which

which places that city beyond Termini, on the side of Palermo.

Scarcely had we passed Mount Termini, before the climate and the face of the country changed at once. This is indeed the favourite abode of the nymphs, the residence of the divinities of the fountains, which burst forth on every side equally abundant and brilliant; each rock seems to conceal a spring. The mild beams of the sun, and the fertilizing streams, adorn the earth with the richest and most beauteous covering. Three miles from hence, Termini advances in a semicircle into the sea. We lodged there at an inn, for there is an inn at Termini. Our first sally was to visit the famous baths, which the nymphs, to gratify Minerva, brought out of the rock, to bathe and refresh Hercules. We found however neither nymphs nor Hercules, but a number of poor paralytic patients, to whom they were administering the hot water, by pouring it on the afflicted limbs and affected parts, from a very copious spring. It would be extremely difficult to ascertain the antiquity of what is remaining of the baths of Termini. The style of this structure is not sufficiently perfect, to allow us to ascribe them to the Romans, much

less to the Greeks. Though not absolutely in a bad manner, they have not the smallest appearance of magnificence. The plan of the ruins consists in a gallery, semicircularly curved, in the bottom recess of which is the spring, over which a stove has been built. The steam of hot water proceeds from under the pavement of the stove, and circulates on each side through the two galleries. It seems probable that this gallery anciently formed a complete circle, and that the water was again collected in a basin in the middle, where it retained only lukewarm heat.

From hence we went to the principal church, which is not yet finished. This church is building on the ruins of an ancient palace, said to be that of *Stenius*, the Proconsul. Affixed to the wall of the town house is seen the fragment of a consular figure, said to be that of this magistrate. They have disfigured this antique, by adding to it a wretched head, and still worse hands. In the same town house is the bust of a woman, equally antique, and mutilated like the other, but of exquisite workmanship, and discovered at the same time. It is supposed to be the wife of *Stenius*, though there is nothing which proves it

it to have been the head of any particular person. In the portal of the town house there is a great number of fragments of inscriptions of different periods, the work of the Romans, Saracens, Arabs, and Greek Emperors. These fragments are inserted at random into the wall, with a marble tablet, on which are sculptured the same figures as are found on the medals of the ancient *Himera*. The first represents a cock, with this inscription, HIMEPION : on the reverse is a skin, of which the characteristics are not very distinct, but which is thought to be that of a lion : the second is a cock, with the inscription HIMEPA, and on the reverse a crab : the third a cock, and on the reverse a hen : the fourth a head of Hercules, bound with a lion's skin, and on the reverse the three graces, with this inscription, OCPMITAN :^c the fifth a triumphal car, with two horses, and this inscription, HIMEPA-ION. On the reverse a woman offering a sacrifice : the sixth and last a head of Hercules, with the lion's skin ; on the reverse the

^c Probably ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ, such a coin as that here described, being known to antiquaries, and preserved in the Museum of the late Dr. Hunter, with the inscription ΘΕ ΜΙΤΑΝ for the city of Thermae, probably the modern Termini of our author.

figure

figure of a woman holding a cornucopia, with this vertical inscription,

V
O
O
P
T
A
N

Two altars or pedestals are also affixed to the front of the same building. On that on the right is the following inscription in large characters :

D
I
V
O
C
O
M
M
O
D
O
A
V
G

D
I
V
O
C
O
M
M
O
D
O
A
V
G

P
P

and on the other side is a mutilated altar with this inscription :

A
N
T
I
A
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M
F
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L
E
O
P
A
T
R
A
E
S
A
C
E
R
D
O
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X
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T

In the cloister of the Dominican convent, we found the broken foot of a colossal statue, with an embroidered buskin. As this sort of buskin

buskin is no part of the true antique *costume*, I imagine it to be of the time of the Greek Emperors, when studied finishing, had taken place of the grand and simple outline. ~~so off~~

We were shewn the house of an old Abbé, named *Lao Scoffa*, who, while digging the foundation of a house, discovered some remains of a temple, which they have christened the temple of Hercules, from a marble club found there, with some capitals and trunks of fluted columns.

The city of Termini is supposed to have been built by the Carthaginians, after they had destroyed *Himera*; and it is imagined, that it afterward became one of their ports in Sicily. Some of the inhabitants having assured us that we had passed through the territory of *Himera*, and that this city had stood where we had suspected, we presently returned thither, and discovered very distinctly its situation, as described in history; the beach on which Hamilcar drew up his ships, and the place of encampment of his land army, situated opposite to the walls of the city, and extending along the eminence by which it is commanded. I ran over the whole plain on foot and horseback, and could only discover the site of *Himera*,

from

from some fragments of *mattoni* scattered over the surface of the earth, which is now tilled, and produces plentiful crops of corn and rice. The only structure I found within its precincts, and which seems to have escaped the rage and vengeance of the Carthaginians, consists of a few broken roofs, and the fragments of great walls, which have formed part of a very considerable edifice, built against the mountain, the crumbling of which has preserved some parts of it, by crushing the remainder, and covering the whole. From the thickness of the walls, the form of the vaulted roofs, and especially from a double coating of stalactites, discoverable in several places, there is reason to believe that these fragments are the remains of baths, or of a reservoir which received the water from the mountain, and distributed it throughout the city. This structure however, which is composed of various kinds of materials, possesses none of the characteristics of Grecian architecture.

History informs us, that Hamilcar, at the head of three hundred thousand men, landed at *Panormus*, the modern Palermo; that having led his troops before Himera, he drew his vessels up on the shore, surrounding them with a

ditch,

ditch, defended by palisadoes, which he entrusted to the guard of the Phœnicians, and formed his camp on the high ground; that Gelo the Syracusan chief, at the solicitation of Theron, his father in law, king of Agrigentum, hastened to the assistance of Himera; that having intercepted the couriers who brought intelligence to Hamilcar, of the arrival of the cavalry, that General expected from the Selinontians, he sent his own cavalry instead of them, with orders to put to death the deceived Hamilcar, and set fire to the vessels, having gained access to the enclosure which defended them, by his stratagem.

This artifice was as successful as Gelo could have wished; one hundred and fifty thousand Carthaginians were slain, and the remainder made prisoners. History affords few examples of so great a battle, and of so complete a victory; nor does nature any where offer a more magnificent scene for the picture of so important an event. The vengeance of Hannibal, the grandson of Hamilcar, might also be represented, who seventy years after, having destroyed Himera to its foundations, led six thousand prisoners, who had escaped from the carnage,

carnage, and sacrificed them to the manes of his grandfather, on the very spot where he had fallen. We quitted the territory of **Himera**, the native country of **Stesichorus**, the inventor of bucolick poetry, and the place, where comedy for the first time was represented, after it was improved and ennobled by the celebrated **Epicharmus**.

ROAD TO PALERMO.

We set out from **Termini** at sun-rise, and travelled by the pleasantest road in the world, to **La Bagaria**, a village fourteen miles from **Termini**. The **Palermian** noblemen have attempted to overcome the sterility of the soil of **La Bagaria**, and by great expense in buildings and gardens, have rendered it a magnificent, if not a pleasing spot. We must except however the house and gardens of **Prince Volguernera**, which have a very interesting appearance, and would be a delightful place of residence, were the parts finished with the same taste as the whole has been planned.

Opposite to this handsome villa is that of **Prince Palagonia**, rendered unfortunately celebrated by his passion for monsters. Nor indeed

deed can any thing be more extravagant than the manner in which he has loaded with monstrous figures, the walls, avenues, apartments, and even the very chapel of his house, without taste even in *his* manner: it seems as if he was determined to ruin himself by amassing and piling up in his palace, the most abominable indecencies. You would imagine you were entering the palace of *Conculia*,^f and leave it with only a sentiment of contempt for the owner, who is said however to be a very amiable man. Fortunately the confusion of the objects effaces them from the mind, as soon as they are seen, and leaves only an indistinct idea of this collection, formed apparently without motive, and as difficult to describe, as disagreeable to behold, either in drawings or reality.

Taking our leave as early as possible, of this disgusting assemblage, we set out for Palermo, which is eight miles beyond this village, and where we arrive by a large road, gravelled like a garden walk.

^f See *La Pucelle d'Orleans*, L. 1. Canto 4th. Voltaire has changed *Conculix* into *Hermaphroditx*, in the latter editions. Translator.

PALERMO.

The city of Palermo does not appear to the utmost advantage on this side. Built on a spot of ground which has no other variety than a sinking towards the centre, the buildings, as viewed from without the town, seem mutually to destroy the effect of each other; and the prospect of the country, which consists only in a plain, almost perfectly level, is absolutely lost behind the perpendicular mountains, that environ, and seem to touch the walls of the city.

In this place, totally different from what it was in former days, we now discover nothing of the ancient *Panormus*, but the scite, which is the same, and which was formerly divided into three parts. The middle, and most ancient quarter, was called by the Greeks *Panormos, totus portus*, the harbour of all nations. It was a peninsula, formed on one side by the sea, which runs a considerable way inland, by a channel running from east to west, and bathes the walls of the city. To the north the river *Orethus*, the modern *Amiraglio*, flows in the same direction, and bounds it to the south. Beyond this river was built a suburb, called

Neapolis,

Neapolis, or the New City. This was the part the Romans surrounded with palisades, when in the first Punic war, (the year of Rome 502) they took it from the Carthaginians. As soon as they had obtained possession of a tower which commanded the entrance of the harbour of the old city, Panormus surrendered at discretion. On the other side of the old town was another quarter, the foundations of which are still visible, the modern walls being built on them. In consequence of this division, the ancient city had an inner harbour, which by means of the channel and the river, received the vessels of those ages, in its very centre; they might indeed lie almost all round the walls of the old town. Length of time, earthquakes, and the crumbling of the earth, have begun to choke up both these channels, which are indeed become useless, from the manner of building ships in modern times. The river has changed its course, and now flows at some distance from the city. Its bed, and the canal which ran parallel to it, have also been entirely filled up to build houses on the scite, which, being lower than the rest, enable us still to distinguish the ancient from the modern ground, by the rising and sinking of the streets

that cross them. Nothing is remaining of the old port but a small bay, containing a few Sicilian barks, and some vessels which they would not venture to leave here in winter, on account of the northerly winds that might drive them ashore.

This bay, as well as Palermo, is at the bottom of a great gulph, formed to the eastward by Cape *Zofarano*, and the mountain of *Catalfano*, and to the westward by mount *Ereta*, now called Mount *Pellegrino*. Under this hill a mole has been formed, which affords a secure shelter for vessels of all sizes. The territory of the city, which lies behind it, is far from being inconsiderable. It is extremely productive from the nature of the soil, and is still farther fertilized by a great number of springs, producing a wonderful vegetation in the trees, which furnish it with refreshing shades. This country was planted with trees in the remotest periods. Livy tells us that the Romans surrounded the quarter of *Neapolis* the more easily with palisades, as the country was covered with wood. At this day it is overspread with villas and gardens, the more delightful, as they form a most agreeable contrast with the majestic back-ground of the sea, and the steep and parched aspect of the adjacent mountains.

The

The more we see of Palermo, and the more minutely it is examined, the more we shall be sensible of its beauty. Handsome streets, large and beautiful squares, public fountains, and private ones, even in the fourth story of every house; superb churches, and delightful walks; a good air; a vast population, with a cleanliness not to be found in any other city of the kingdom; a tolerably extensive commerce, though not the twelfth part of what it might be; a great number of houses, at once rich, noble, and sumptuous; a warm climate, lively passions, pleasing women, and the luxuries of the *Sybarites* are all found there; we may judge then, whether with all these enjoyments, this city should be preferred as a place of residence to any other in the kingdom.

We arrived here on the second of July, ten days before the festival of the female Saint Rosalia, once a citizen of Palermo, whom they have thought proper to dig up in a grotto of Mount *Pellegrino*, in the midst of the burial places and gigantic bones of the Saracens interred in the same place. She has been happily conveyed to Palermo, where her remains never fail annually and daily, to perform in-

numerable miracles; but the most striking doubtless of all is, their setting in motion for five days in the year, one of the gravest people of all Europe.

We first visited the mother church, *La Matrice*; for so they call the cathedrals in Italy. The exterior of this is one of the finest remains we have of the twelfth century, for the architecture of that period, and the finishing of its minute ornaments, which are infinite. This edifice is in the highest preservation, and gives the place an Asiatic air I have seen nowhere but in that of Brussels. It was built by Walter, Bishop of Palermo, under the reign of William the II^d. The inside does not correspond with its external appearance. Though the plan of it be handsome enough, the decoration is of a mixed style by no means pleasing: each pillar, composed of four short columns joined together, supports a gigantic arch, surmounted by a great attic, terminated by a roof of timber. The inside however, which is falling to ruin, is about to be repaired, probably without gaining much by the change; for the same columns which have already spoilt the original design, will no doubt produce the same effect in the new one. They are too short

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to enter into the principal decoration of a great edifice, and must perpetually remain an impediment to every improvement. Yet, as they are of granite, and of great value in the opinion of the Palermians, they are determined they shall be used, and have adopted a plan for the rebuilding, in which they will produce the same bad effect as they did before. To the right of the choir, are the tombs of four Emperors, of a rare beauty from their materials, and almost from their style, which has often occasioned them to be taken for antiques. They are all four of red porphyry, and three of them are each cut from a single block, in a form similar to that of the celebrated tomb of Agrippa, formerly at the Pantheon, and now in the church of St. John de Lateran, at Rome.

The grandeur and beauty of these pieces of porphyry, have made it conjectured, that these princes had dispossessed some Roman heroes of their sepulchres, as Pope Corsini dislodged Agrippa. But why may not these princes, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the pompous sepulchres again came into fashion, have brought back from the crusades, or procured by means of the fleets they sent thither,

these blocks hewn in Asia, and have been tempted from the similitude of the materials, to make unfaithful copies of the famous tomb of Agrippa? The bad taste of the cornice, the difference of the finishing, and the wretched style of the sculpture, sufficiently discover the age that produced them. Besides, that the fourth tomb, as well as the columns that support the pediment which covers two of them, of porphyry likewise, and of the same porphyry, are executed in a taste which gives additional weight to this opinion. Notwithstanding the expense therefore of the conveyance, and of the workmanship of these sarcophagi, there is every reason to imagine them to be no more ancient than the bodies they contain. The tomb of King Boemond, which I have seen at *Canosa*, executed in the same age, and under the same circumstances, sufficiently attests the attention paid by these princes, to the embellishment of their sepulchres.

Close by is the altar of the holy sacrament, the tabernacle of which is of lapis lazuli, of the greatest value. The sculpture of the choir is by Caggini, less happy in the execution of the figures, than in the bas reliefs of the *arabesques*, which are of exquisite taste and variety.

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We visited the other churches, which are innumerable, and generally handsome, particularly that of St. Joseph, no less rich than magnificent. The columns are of a grey marble of the country, and are sixty feet high of a single block. This marble, which as well as the red, is very common at Palermo, decorates almost all the buildings of the city. The oratory of St. Philip is an entirely modern work, and in a very pleasing taste; the Chapel of Christ, in the upper church of the same monastery, is a rich collection of precious stones. Several of these handsome churches are spoilt by a coating of marble inlaid, and a superfluity of gaudy ornaments, which dazzle and fatigue the eye, and are totally inconsistent with good taste, which is invariably simple. The beautiful church of the late convent of the Jesuits however, is an exception. In the second chapel on the right in that church, are two pictures of the greatest beauty, by Morealese. This painter, who himself alone formed the Sicilian school, painted every piece worth attention in Palermo, and its environs. This able artist first formed himself after the manner of Spagnoletto: becoming acquainted afterwards with the celebrated Vandyke, he

studied the graceful manner of that painter, and united to the vigorous style of the former, the grace and charming truth of the latter; which makes his pictures of the second period, superior to those of the former, and renders him one of the first painters of Italy. His daughter also painted extremely well. Many pictures are to be seen begun by her, and finished by her father, which are not amongst the least pleasing productions of that artist.

I had a great number of letters of recommendation; but I found the very first day, that one good one was sufficient to procure as much society, as a stranger could wish for in Palermo. I was recommended to the Prince *de Pietre Percia*, who insisted on my making his house my own. He was better able than any person to make me acquainted with every thing I might desire to learn, relative to his country, and undertook to gratify my curiosity in every point; he never quitted me, and made me partake of all the pleasures of a city, where pleasures is well understood, and where the inhabitants know how to enjoy it. He conducted me to the general society, a sort of club, supported with much magnificence, and at a trifling expense, by the subscriptions of the nobility of both sexes,

sexes, who by this means enjoy that decent liberty which agreeable families take at home, without the trouble of doing or receiving, the honours of master or mistress of the house. The prince here presented me to all his friends, who became from that moment my acquaintances.

The women, who are handsome, but still more agreeable, seem to have no more accomplishments than what are proper to render them amiable: they have sufficient wit to render pedantry unnecessary, and more curiosity than timidity. They are very courteous in their manner of receiving strangers, know how to converse with them, and very soon engage their attention and esteem. The men are noble and sumptuous, possess real wit, and an ease in their manners, which is perfectly genteel and dignified. They marry here so young, that the husbands in general are children; and I almost imagined I saw our obstreperous French *petits-maitres*, occupied with their liveries, dog and horses, but all astonishment at the luxury allowed them by their parents, and wondering at the noise they are suffered to make. The *conversazione* which commences at one o'clock at night, that is to say, at nine in the evening,

evening, in the month of July, finishes at four or five, corresponding with our one in the morning. From hence the company repair to the Marino, a charming walk on the sea shore, the rendezvous of all Palermo, where they enjoy the shade and coolness after six in the afternoon. No person ever thinks of going to bed at Palermo, without taking a turn on the Marino. It seems as if this were a privileged spot, with plenary indulgence, and that the Sicilians had so far forgotten their natural character in its favour, as to prohibit even the approach of torches, and every thing which might restrain certain little clandestine liberties. It would be difficult to account for such a singularity, did we not know that this custom, permitting every one to partake of the same advantages, silences the murmurs of those whose jealous dispositions it may torment.

In this hallowed walk in short, an obscurity the most mysterious, and most rigorously respected reigns. The whole company is intermingled without distinction. They seek for and find each other. Supper parties are formed, and carried into execution snugly, and upon the spot, at taverns built along the walls of the

the rampart. I had the good fortune to be admitted the very first evening to one of these delightful parties, and to sup with a most amiable company of both sexes. I found here the same liberty as at the conversazione, founded on the same principles; a joyous society, and so general an ease, that it was in vain I looked for either Sicilians or husbands, and began to suspect their reputed jealousy ought to be placed in the number of those tales which are told us two hundred years after the existence of the facts they record. I was indulging myself in this pleasing error, when the day surprized me, and on rising from table, I perceived, to my astonishment, that it was half past three.

Thus do the inhabitants of Palermo vary the order of nature, and preserve themselves from feeling, and almost from recollecting, the heat of their climate. They rise at noon, when the sea breeze, which springs up at ten, has already tempered the heat, which is excessive till that hour. They then repair either for business or pleasure, to the *Caffaro*, a large and superb street, which crosses the whole city from north to south, and is crossed by another called the new street, equally handsome, and which,

which, together with the former, divides the town into four parts. At the intersection of these streets, their irregular angles form a kind of circus very richly decorated ; from the centre of which are seen the four gates of the city, the adjacent country, the mountains, and the sea. This astonishing view of the whole city, the most remarkable perhaps of any of the same kind, would be the most beautiful that could possibly be imagined, were the buildings ornamented in a better taste, and these two streets somewhat wider, that their breadth might bear some proportion to their length.

The prodigious population of Palermo, which is as great, in proportion to the size of the two cities, as that of Naples, is here particularly discovered. The number of carriages is truly astonishing, for these are so much in fashion at Palermo, that a coach is become matter of absolute necessity, and that enjoyment, which is a mere luxury in so clean a town, is often purchased at the expence of what is of far more consequence and utility.

The nobility parade in the *Caffaro* till three in the afternoon ; they then dine, and a public band of music invites them to the *Marino*, two hours before night. From hence they pass to

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the *conversazione* I have mentioned, or the opera, which is the only public entertainment, beginning an hour before night, and ending as the conversations, at midnight, or one in the morning, when they return to the *Marino*, the constantly recurring amusement of the Palermian day. This diurnal round of pleasure is interrupted only by the entertainments of the carnival, which change the order of enjoyments, only to render them more lively, by the two seasons for the country, which are May and October, and by the festival of Saint Rosalia, which exhibits the most splendid and most agreeable enthusiasm of devotion; but here, as at the opera, the ballets and entertainments frequently throw the principal subject into the back ground. In these rejoicings, they lose sight of Saint Rosalia, who might perhaps be totally forgotten, if at the end of the fifth day, at the conclusion of a most burlesque procession, the shrine of this blessed lady were not saluted by pateraroes, which at length apprise the people of her presence. The procession is opened by a waggon drawn by forty mules, and loaded with as many musicians, who make all the noise they can, mounted

mounted on this enormous machine, the loftiest ever placed on wheels, and which is higher than any house in the city. It sets out from the Marino, and crosses the *Caffaro*, from the *porta felice* to the palace of the viceroy, before which a splendid fire-work is played off, and the ceremony concludes with an illumination of the *Caffaro*, which is decorated alternately with porticoes and fountains.

This street, nearly a mile long on a concave surface, is visible in its whole length, and presents a most magnificent sight. The populace celebrate the festival till midnight, when they are succeeded by the carriages and the nobility. On these occasions we cannot but remark the gravity of the people of Sicily, who enjoy all this without the smallest external symptom of joy or pleasure. They would revolt perhaps, were the Senate to retrench this festival; yet they look on it with composure, without a smile or any token of satisfaction, observing the most perfect good order, without requiring the interposition of any kind of *police*. No tumult ever happens: and though there are upwards of one hundred thousand persons collected on the

the same spot, there never is any crowding. I remarked, that of their own voluntary motion, and not to straighten themselves, the inhabitants divided the street between them, one side for those coming up, the other for the passengers going down. They are very different from our populace, who want to see every thing before it begins, keep looking when it has begun, and still push forward to stare about them when all is over; who never remain quiet so long as a lamp is lighted, and can hardly prevail on themselves to withdraw even when the lights are extinguished. Here the labourer or mechanic, as soon as midnight comes, leads off his wife or mistress, whose arm he has never quitted, and resigns his place without clamour to the nobility, who enter with the same order, and display, with true Italian pomp, their magnificent equipages and gala liveries.

One of the exhibitions which produces the most effect on the Sicilian phlegm, is the horse race, of which they are passionately fond, and which forms the object of the second day's amusement. Little boys of eight years old are mounted on horses bare-backed, and without stirrups, and urge them forward

forward with inconceivable spirit. There are three of these races. I saw the starting of the first, which is from the *porta felice*. The horses stand behind a cord, where their ardour is so great, that it is difficult to restrain them; sensible for what purpose they are brought there, they are already anxious to begin the contest, and to gain the advantage of each other in the outset. The first signal is given by one of the Senators from his box, by the ringing of a bell. The little jockeys are now lifted on horseback, and seated forward on the shoulders, with their heads advanced over the neck, and their legs extended along the sides, in the attitude of striking their spurs into the horses flanks, which they do with wonderful agility. On the second ringing of the bell, the cord is dropt, the horses set off, and the firing of a cannon warns the people along the street, that the race is begun. The crowd now divide, but barely in time to let the horses pass, which make every effort not only to get first, but to cross and jostle, and by every means retard the speed of their rivals. Another Senator, at the end of the race ground, adjudges the prize to the victor; and the little boy is carried off in triumph,

triumph, and decorated with the figure of an eagle put over his neck, amidst the acclamations of all his party. The horses are provided by rich individuals, who maintain them the whole year, for the diversion of this single day, and are not less delighted with their triumph than the little jockey, in the true ancient spirit of the Olympic games, for the sole honour of vanquishing ; for the ruinous custom of betting, too much practised in other countries, is unknown at Palermo. The Senate are at the whole expense of the prizes, which amount only to forty ounces, or twenty pounds for the three races. The first is run for by horses of the country ; the second, by mares ; the third, which is much the swiftest, by Arabians. This festivity of the second day is concluded by the return of the huge car, which begins its journey from the palace of the viceroy, and proceeds back to the Marino, stopping every twenty or thirty yards, to let the music play. On this occasion it is lighted up ; which added to the illumination of the street, produces a more triumphal effect than by day-light.

The car repasses again the third day, and begins to become tiresome. It seems to be

put in motion this day only to be pulled to pieces at the square of the palace. This evening the fire-works played off at the Marino, the illumination, which exhibits this walk in all its beauty, that of the *Caffaro* and of the houses situated towards the sea, all conspire to convert Palermo into an enchanted city. The races are repeated in the afternoon of the fourth day, and inspire the same enthusiasm. In the evening, the great church is superbly decorated and illuminated, the effect of which is truly beautiful and astonishing. The archbishop having been so good as to take us under his protection, we enjoyed perfectly and without being in the least incommoded, this most magnificent spectacle. The whole inside of this vast edifice is now decorated with peculiar ornament, less solemn, and more suitable to the occasion, which might serve as a model for all embellishments of this nature. A few fringes, garlands of paper, and silvered pasteboard, with a number of common little looking-glasses, form the whole expense of this decoration, which is arranged and lighted with so much art, as to render it impossible to form any idea of its magnificence. This architecture without shading is perfectly transparent;

parent; the reflection of the lights upon the silver appears like so many glittering stars; and so brilliant is the lustre on every side, that the eye is absolutely overpowered and fatigued with too great resplendence.

The fifth day is celebrated by a most tiresome procession which begins at sunset, and does not end till one in the morning. Here the taste of the Palermians for the machinery of religion appears in its full force, and they shew how much their devotion is elevated with the elevation of their saints. Each congregation carries its patron, with the representation of some scene from the Old or New Testament, acted by grown up persons, or even by children. The preparation of these figures is the work of the nuns in their convents, and they always take care to dress and powder out Judith and the Virgin in the newest fashion. They are borne on scaffolds on the shoulders of thirty, or six and thirty men, who glory in making their saint run faster than the others, in performing marches and counter-marches with them, and in twirling round, with truly barbarous shouts of triumph. At length arrives St. Rosalia, whose procession is rather more stately. Immediately after, their tumultuous joy

is checked, the people fall upon their knees, and thus terminates the festival.

This saint was educated at the court of king Roger, in the beginning of the twelfth century, and suddenly took a resolution to quit the court and the queen, and lead a solitary life in a damp grotto, on Mount Pelegrino, near Palermo. A convent has been since built there, which has spoilt the grotto, and a road has been made at great expense to facilitate the pilgrimage to this sanctuary.

The festival being ended, we employed ourselves in visiting the environs of Palermo. We first went to the monastery of S. Martino, of the order of Saint Benedict. This convent, built in the mountains, has rather the air of a Carthusian monastery in the midst of deserts, yet it is but eight miles from Palermo, and is approached by a very fine road. The house it self, which is neither handsome nor well finished, is very large. Some parts of it are deserving attention, and the corridors are elegant. The greatest order reigns here, with a magnificence more noble than ostentatious, and an easy politeness towards strangers, who, on being introduced, are received, entertained and lodged almost as long as they think proper,

per, with the most distinguished marks of attention. Great part of the monks are of the first families of Palermo, which is easily discoverable from their air and manner. The library is very large, and well taken care of. The building appropriated to it is one of the simplest and handsomest I have seen for the purpose; every part of the cabinet work is perfect. We here met with Dom Blazi. This indefatigable monk passes his life in studious researches, enriches the library every day, and has begun a museum which is already well furnished, and will become considerable by the intelligent activity of its founder. It contains some specimens of all sorts of curiosities. He has already some very fine Sicilian vases; one amongst others, representing the figure of a woman, standing before a seat, and speaking to a man with a staff in his hand; on the other side is the same female figure holding a sponge in her hand before a basin, and the same man undressed, having in one hand the tessera peculiar to the baths; which may denote hospitality, stopping a traveller, and assisting him in bathing; a circumstance that would indicate, that these vases were employed also for this purpose, and not reserved solely

for the tombs. I found likewise among these curiosities an ivory tessera, representing two hands, with the following Greek inscriptions :

IMTAXIMIA XUNOC
INIBAAOCS XAUPOC ZENIAN
EPONCATOPROSATCCON
ΔΙΟΓΝΗΤΟΤ KAITANETIONAN.

There is reason to believe this to have been a letter of recommendation, and, like a bill at sight, payable in hospitality to the bearer. Plates have been engraved of these remains of antiquity, and *Dom Blazi* presented me with some of the proofs.

We saw some Greek medals, a marble chandelier six feet high, in good taste and of beautiful workmanship, and some tombs in the same style.

In the apartment adjoining the library, are some paintings ; amongst others, an Annunciation by Morealese in a highly graceful manner and colouring. There is another of the same painter in the church, which though quite in a different style, is greatly superior to the former. It is the master-piece of all the productions I have seen by this artist, and perhaps one of the finest paintings in the world. On the cieling of one of the refectories, there

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is a Daniel in the Lion's Den, by the same master. This is perhaps the first time that an artist ever thought of painting a den upon a cieling ; but he has overcome the difficulty, and we survey very naturally from below what is never supposed to have been seen but in a situation directly opposite. From this specimen in Fresco, and the picture in the church, he has shewn himself capable of painting in every style with the same degree of perfection.

From hence we were conducted to the place in which they preserve dead bodies after drying them with tempered lime ; but this method preserves them ill, and presents the eye only with hideous mishapen spectres, which, by their grotesque grimaces, produce ridicule, rather than that serious awe which it is intended to inspire, by presenting the image of death. It is the same with the bodies preserved in the vast vault of the capuchins of Palermo, where four or five thousand carcafes, suspended by the neck in separate niches, resemble so many persons hanged, and each of these strange figures seems more grotesque and ludicrous than the other.

After partaking of an excellent dinner at Saint Martin's, we descended by a difficult road to *Monte Reale*, a little town most agreeably situated, at three miles distant from Palermo. William the Good, the last but one of the family of Tancred, who was really a very excellent prince, erected in 1177 the Abbey of the Benedictines, into an Archiepiscopal Abbey, and was so good as to dream that the Virgin presented him with a plan of the cloister of this convent, and of the cathedral church; in consequence of which, he built both these edifices on that plan. They are two truly valuable monuments of the riches and magnificence of that age. The internal architecture, which partakes of the taste of the Saracenic buildings, and of the Grecian style of the Lower Empire, has in this temple a most majestic, and most awful appearance. Every thing in it is grand and solemn, even to the manner in which it is lighted. The ornaments, though rich, are not tawdry. All the walls and arches are covered with Mosaic work, representing subjects from the Old and New Testament. The pavement, of another sort of Mosaic, and in compartments, is in an excellent taste. The lower parts of
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the side wall were covered with marble panels, in a Mosaic moulding; but this part is greatly damaged, and almost destroyed, as well as the perystile which was in the same taste, but is now obliged to be rebuilt. On the right of the choir are seen the two tombs of William the Bad and William the Good, both of the twelfth century. That of William the Bad is exactly in the same style, and of the same materials, as those of the Emperors Henry IV. Frederic II, &c. in the church of Palermo.

The last bishop of *Monte Reale* has covered the great altar magnificently with silver. This bishoprick, formerly worth between eight and nine thousand pounds a year, has been lately united to the see of Palermo, with a diminution of two thirds of the revenue, which is become royal. The outside of the church of *Monte Reale* is not very elegant, and it may be said that the inside of this, and the outside of that of Palermo, would form together the most beautiful and richest edifice of the twelfth century. The best preserved building of this kind is the chapel of the Viceroy's palace, which they have had the good sense carefully to keep entire, without adding a single foreign ornament;

ornament; which renders it a real curiosity. The taste of the ornaments and architecture of this chapel, may be adduced as a proof of what I have already remarked, that the architecture of that age was formed on the model of the lower Grecian periods, to which were added the minute and rich decorations of the Saracens.

On the fine road leading from Monte Reale to Palermo, made at the expense of the revenues of the last bishop, and decorated with more cost than taste or judgment, we find an old castle which now serves as barracks for a regiment of cavalry. It is said to have been built by the Saracens, and to have communicated by a subterraneous passage with another larger one of the same kind, called *Castel Reale*, formerly *Zizza* (which in Arabic signifies a pleasure ground). This castle is believed also to have served as a villa for the viceroy of the caliphs. Palermo, after having been the principal fortress of the Carthaginians, in the time of the Greeks, became that of the Saracens in the period of the eastern empire; it was always considered as the capital of their possessions, and the favourite residence

dence of the Emirs or governors sent into Sicily by the caliphs of Africa in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The external ornaments of this castle, which is built of free stone, project but little, and consist in square windows, under intersecting arches. Its inside is totally disfigured, except the first entry or vestibule, ornamented with mosaics, slender marble pillars, and fountains, in the style of the Moorish palaces still remaining in Spain in the kingdom of Grenada. The perfect resemblance of these decorations is another proof of what I have just observed concerning the architecture of the Norman period. The Saracens having succeeded to the Greeks, and the Normans to the Saracens, it was to be expected that in an age when there was more wealth than real knowledge, they should content themselves with imitating what they had before their eyes, and that the taste of that age should partake of both styles of architecture.

We returned with Prince Pietre Percia to *La Bagaria*, a fief of his family, and from thence went to visit the ruins of Solentum, situated between Panormus and Termini, a very

very ancient city, of the origin of which I am ignorant, but its harbour was frequented by the Phœnicians, and belonged to the Carthaginians, from the time they first obtained, and as long as they continued to preserve, any possessions in Sicily. Pyrrhus took it from them for a short time, and made it his place of arms whilst he was carrying on the siege of Palermo. Of its little bay, under shelter of Mount Catalfano, advantage has been taken by almost every nation that has made descents in Sicily. The ancient city was no doubt built round this creek, but not a trace of it is now remaining. There is still however a tower, called *Castello di Solento*. In the plain we found a great number of sepulchres cut out of the *tufa*, and ranged on a level with the ground, in a parallel direction, four inches from each other. They are now all open, but nothing has been found in them but human bones, and some clumsy lamps. Not far from these, and in an enclosure nearer *La Bagaria*, we were shewn two larger sepulchres, just discovered, and I had the satisfaction of viewing them entire. The excavation is hewn out of the *tufa*, into which we descended by

by several steps, cut likewise out of the solid rock, and leading to a little door, on each side of which, are two open tombs, that formerly contained two bodies; at the bottom, is a niche with lamps and some vases, two of which of extremely delicate workmanship are in my possession. In the whole work not a single stone was inserted except those which closed in the stair-case, and concealed the monument: the rest was formed entirely out of the solid rock. These sepulchres, though executed with great labour and exactness, were destitute of every species of magnificence, for being wholly under ground, they were no longer seen the moment they were finished. We went to see the temples of *Solentum* which were situated on a hill, which was ascended by a narrow road, still so well preserved, that we may clearly perceive the manner of its construction, which is entirely the same with that of the *Via Appia*, and consequently deprives the Romans of the honour of inventing that celebrated kind of causeway. This fragment of road is the more curious, from its being the only antient paved highway now to be found in Sicily. We more than once lost and again discovered the traces of this road, and should probably never have

have found any vestige of the temples, had we not been followed by an old game-keeper, who promised to conduct us on condition of our making him at least keeper of the treasures we were in search of. We found, in fact, amongst the thorns, the site of two small temples, with capitals of the Doric order tolerably well executed, fluted columns, a Doric entablature, the cornice ornamented with lions heads as at Pompeii, and amidst all this, some Ionic capitals, fragments of pediments, and pilasters with flutings so delicate as to resemble threads. It was impossible to take a plan of either of these temples. The inside of the smallest was the rock itself, and the mouldings of the pannels, a part of the interior ornaments, as also the outside steps, are still to be seen cut out of the rock. Round these ruins we discovered the broken remains of walls, and caverns, which appertained, no doubt, to the purificatories, or to the apartments of the priests.

Having attentively examined all these antiquities, I returned to Palermo to enjoy the pleasure of society, for the remainder of my stay. I now no longer found the women any where but at the theatre; there were no more suppers

pers on the Marino, but of parties composed of bachelors like myself. On the walk itself, sudden chilnesses obliged the married men to return home, and, from a *tender care*, they abridged the walks and conversations of their spouses. At the assembly they were always present, and I discovered, in the suspicious vigilance of those I least suspected, that Sicilian jealousy can only conceal itself for a moment, and that none but the women are really disposed to adopt the manners of France in this particular. A passion so violent however, is perhaps necessary to save from total apathy the Palermian barons, who, without it, would pass their lives in an effeminate and voluptuous idleness, anticipating the revenues of their estates, which they never visit, and borrowing from their farmers on the renewal of their leases ; for the Sicilians have no other means of borrowing, the lands being eternally entailed on the eldest son, and subject to no incumbrance, except annuities for the younger boys, or portions for the girls. The feudal laws are still in as full force for the nobility in Sicily, as at the Norman conquest, which produces law-suits for inheritance without end, and enriches a swarm of lawyers, who are found

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in crowds at Palermo, and who are all wealthy. Right being here put up to auction, and justice become a branch of commerce, all the money in the kingdom flows into this city through the channel of the tribunals, and is again distributed among the public by the luxury of their presidents and counsellors.

The senate is composed of young barons, or old noblemen, who take the trouble of being senators only to display and turn to good account the privileges annexed to their dignity and authority. There reigns therefore in this assembly a profound apathy, with a spirit of independence which marks the government, and consequently the people, not only of Palermo, but of all Sicily, with the insular and republican character. The Sicilians, remote from their king, whom they know only by his representative, are accustomed to consider him as a pensioner, whom they defraud of his due; while they pride themselves in granting him free gifts, and from time to time make experiments of disobedience, with the sole view of performing an act that may assert their freedom.^a

^a This they sufficiently manifested in the case of the Marquis Fogliani, the late viceroy, a man no less amiable in

The Sicilians have had so many sovereigns, that they are accustomed to like none of them, and to give the preference only to him, with whom they can make the best conditions. They are ever ready to receive the sovereign who establishes his authority by force, or him who grants them the most favourable terms ; but always with the implied reserve of recurring, in case of violence and tyranny, to the well known methods of revolt, Sicilian vespers, or others of the same nature. Their country furnishing them with all sorts of productions in abundance, they are more difficult to reduce than any nation, as it is impossible to keep them in subjection by refusing them any kind of supplies. They may be despoiled, but never ruined. A bad government therefore can only impoverish, but cannot starve them. In other respects, Palermo feels nothing of that poverty, of which the rest of

in his character, than respectable from his virtues, who, after governing Sicily for eighteen years, with equal disinterestedness and affability, was ignominiously driven from his palace, and the city, by the populace, on no other pretext than his supposed attachment to the nobility, or, more properly speaking, for the purpose of performing an act of authority, in which they succeeded, for another viceroy was sent in his stead.

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Sicily

Sicily may complain: it is one of the handsomest and most pleasing cities a traveller can visit. The affability and courtesy of the inhabitants render his stay there extremely agreeable, and make it very difficult for him to leave it.

We set out from Palermo on the first of August at two in the morning, while it was very dark, as if we had chosen such a moment to conceal from ourselves the enchantment of a place, where every object might have had power to retain us, or leave an impression of regret, from the recollection of some pleasure. We arrived at day-break on the sea shore, at the bay *del Ferra-Cavallo*, leaving Cape *di Gallo* to the right, which is formed by a large steep rock, of dangerous approach, on account of a shoal of pointed rocks. We turned to the left, passing a-breast of the little *Isle delle Femine*, which is close to the continent, and on which there is a single watch tower. We were now opposite to the Isle of *Ustica*, or *Isle of Bones*, so called in memory of the Carthaginians, who returning from an unsuccessful expedition into Sicily, clandestinely abandoned there, six thousand

sand auxiliary troops who demanded their pay, and soon covered this rock with their bones; a striking example of Punic perfidy and cruelty.

C A R I N I.

Here, quitting the sea, we proceeded to Carini, a large town containing seven thousand inhabitants, eighteen miles from Palermo, built in the bottom of a fertile valley surrounded by high rocks, and situated in the midst of a well cultivated district, abounding in wine, grain of various kinds, olives, and all sorts of fruit. I know not whether easy circumstances naturally produce cleanliness, but I could not but remark the extreme neatness of the town of Carini, which appeared to me an extraordinary phenomenon in the kingdom of Sicily. On a rock stands an old Gothic castle, with nothing remarkable about it, inhabited by the prince of that name.

A great quantity of excellent manna is collected at Carini, which oozes from a sort of ash tree, the leaf of which in shape bears some resemblance to that of the acacia, and the bark in its texture to that of the ebon tree. I had

before found manna trees at Termini and Palermo; but they appeared to me so young, that I took them for nursery plants. I found here, however, that youth is the period of abundance with this tree, in which, as soon as it is seven or eight years old, and has grown to the height of eight feet, they begin to make horizontal incisions in the bark, from whence flows the manna. This operation is repeated every two days, from the fifteenth of July, until the rains or fogs of autumn suspend the circulation, or adulterate the quality of this glutinous gum. These incisions are made, one above the other, from the surface of the earth to the top of the tree, and the operation is daily repeated as long as the season permits. The liquor first appears like a white froth extremely light, pleasing to the palate, and of a very agreeable flavour. The heat of the sun coagulates this frothy juice, and gives it the form of stalactites. This is what they call lacrymatory or cane manna; the dearest and finest sort. It remains almost white, and the glutinous and more highly coloured liquor that now distills from it, is received on leaves of the Indian fig, placed for that purpose at the foot of the tree. This

too

too becomes at length congealed by the sun, and being then taken up in lumps, forms what is called fat manna, which is heavier, more purgative, and of much less value. It is this part of it alone, which, when fresh, possesses that faint and disagreeable taste so disgusting in manna; for that in cane, eaten off the tree, is of an agreeable flavour, and an excellent stomachic. The latter is detached from the bark by bending the tree and shaking it. When the season is rainy, the quantity produced is considerably less, and they are obliged to gather it every day, which occasions it to be less fine and clear; that which has been wet is worth nothing, and corrupts. The method of multiplying this tree is to sow it, and transplant when at the height of three or four feet. When the stem is entirely covered with incisions, they cut it down close to the ground, and it pushes forth tufts of young wood, of which they preserve one or two shoots on each sucker, on which they repeat the former process. The wood is hard, heavy and bitter, and the decoction of it aperitive, and of great efficacy in the dropsy. Every climate is not adapted to the culture of this tree. It is productive only in hot countries,

and does not thrive, unless where it is exposed to the north winds. This part of the island only produces manna, which, though less celebrated than that of Calabria, is dearer, and preferred to it. The superiority may arise from its being a native production in Sicily, and consequently thriving better there; and the celebrity of the Calabrian manna, from its having been there more anciently known and cultivated. I am persuaded that this tree would thrive in France, and produce manna in Provence.

We left Carini at four in the morning. After three miles travelling to regain the sea, we found at the foot of a mountain the grotto of *Garbolangi*, the entrance of which neither struck me as beautiful or picturesque, though I had heard it so much boasted of; but it is best to lay little stress on the emphatic style of Italian descriptions, especially when we have it not in our power to verify their accuracy. I was greatly disappointed therefore in this grotto, which had been described to me as something truly stupendous. I was unable to judge of its depth, which is said to have been founded for upwards of half a mile without finding bottom. It is evident however that it has no other opening; for it is

is so destitute of air as to render the least smoke of lamps suffocating. A physician, who assured me that he had advanced farther in than any person, told me it was covered with hard stalactites, which I found indeed at its entrance. But this congelation is not brilliant as far as I saw it ; for having no lamp, and the roof sinking and dividing itself into several passages, I did not venture to advance, for fear of meeting with holes, or losing my way, in dark and winding paths, where I could not hope to make any discovery.

Near this grotto, proceeding towards the sea, stood the small but rich city of *Hyccara*, the birth place of the celebrated courtezan *Lais*, who was conveyed into Greece when Nicias destroyed her country, and carried off three hundred talents. *Hyccara* was razed to its foundation, and its territory given to the *Segestians*, who had called in the assistance of the *Athenians*, against the *Selinuntians* and *Syracusans*, on the occasion of a quarrel between the cities of *Selinus* and *Segesta* ; a quarrel which was the prelude and pretext of the famous siege of *Syracuse* by that unfortunate general, whose only exploit was the capture of *Hyccara*.

Some fragments of walls, and aqueducts of the ancient city of Hyccara are said to be still remaining, but I could discover nothing but some scattered fragments of *mattoni*, which indicate its former situation. A copper medal was found here, some years ago, with a woman's head on one side, with this inscription, HKAP, and on the reverse a wolf. There have been found also, two miles farther up the country, towards Carini, some silver medals of Segesta, with capitals and bases of marble columns; which might lead us to conjecture, that the territory of Hyccara being given to the Segestans, they had built higher up in the country another town, destroyed likewise in its turn by the Romans, or Syracusans, who restored Carini, so called from a corruption of *Hyccara*. Some huts were built in modern times under the protection of the castle, which from the excellence of the country have given rise to the opulent town at present existing here.

On leaving Carini a second time, following the course of the sea for thirty miles, I passed through a tolerably fine country, watered by three little rivers, the *S. Cataldo*, the *Calattano*, and the *S. Bartolomeo*, the most considerable

able of the three, which falls into the sea near *Castelamare*, the ancient harbour of *Segesta*, situated rather advantageously at the angle of a gulph under mount *Inici*, which shelters it from the north wind. The situation of this *Castelamare* greatly resembles the *Castelamare* near Naples: it has the same shade, the same shelter, and the hill of Cape *St. Vito* seems to be that of *Sorrento* and Cape *Minerva*. This however is greatly inferior to the latter in point of prospect, and the richness of the country.

There is only a wretched castle here, and nothing to be seen, no, absolutely nothing. Here I eat, for the first time, Indian figs, and the fruit of the *Opuntia*, a plant which over-spreads all the uncultivated lands, grows to the height of twelve or fifteen feet, and produces a prodigious quantity of a luscious fruit, agreeable enough when iced. It is sold almost for nothing, and the people consume great quantities of it.

THE TEMPLE OF SEGESTA.

As we slept on the floor, we had no difficulty in setting out betimes in the morning, and

and soon discovered at a distance the temple of Segesta. Having its aspect east, or towards the rising sun, it was receiving its earliest rays. It is almost perfectly preserved, and seemed to us built thus in the desert, in order to impress its votaries with the greater awe and veneration. And indeed it appears almost miraculous that such an edifice should still exist so little impaired by time on the site of, or near to, a city of which we discovered not another vestige.*

Segesta built, as fame has reported, by *Æneas*, was a rich, strong and celebrated city, the rival of *Selinus*, an ally of the Greeks, and supported by Athens in the expedition of *Nicias*. It was in the possession of the Carthaginians, who were long masters of this part of the island, and was afterwards totally destroyed by *Agathocles*, tyrant of *Syracuse*. It appeared to me the most disadvantageously situated of all the ancient cities I had yet seen, placed on an uneven spot of ground, destitute of water, ex-

* I have since learnt that there are still to be seen the ruins of an ancient theatre, but whether it be from its distance from the city and the temple, or whether it was so far demolished, or covered over, as to disappear from the eye, it escaped my researches.

posed

posed to every wind, without a river, without a harbour, and surrounded by steep and dreary rocks. There is reason to believe, that the temple which is situated on an eminence, and environed on three sides by a deep channel of a torrent, stood at all times detached, and was built without the precinct of the city. Its ground plan is an oblong square of one hundred and seventy-seven feet, two inches and six lines, by seventy-four feet ten inches, formed by six columns in the front, and fourteen in depth. Those of the angles are equal to the others in diameter, which is six feet four inches, six lines, by eight and twenty feet six inches in height. The general intercolumniation is seven feet and an inch, except between the two columns forming the entrance, where there is an almost imperceptible difference of about nine inches. An entablature of ten feet ten inches nine lines in height, which would appear heavy on any other but a Colossal order, here produces an admirable effect. Though the mouldings have but little relief, they throw beautiful shades, from the happy disposition of the acute angles, formed by the under surface of the mutules, which not only gives effect to the architecture, but prevents

prevents the return of the water, and the consequent damage to the building.

The front, which has a furbase, and is very simple, is in all fifty-eight feet two inches high, including the three steps to the peristyle. The columns have from ten to thirteen layers: a general plinth in form of stylobates or grand pedestal, shuts in the peristyle of the temple, except the entrance; and upon this plinth is a grove of two inches and a half deep, which runs round the shaft above the plinth, and makes the shaft appear to project in relieveo; a fillet marks all the internal layers. The intent of this fillet was, either to add to the richness of the appearance, or to preserve the layers more perfect for the finishing; for it is evident that this temple was never finished, the projecting stones retained for the convenience of the construction still existing in the large stones of the plinth, and of those steps which are not buried. We found the same projections too on some of the stones of the pediment. As a further confirmation of this, all the capitals, at the part where they determine the module of the column, are two inches less in radius than the top of the shaft, which in the present

present state produces a bad effect, and the irregular form of the shaft as it now is, should incline us to believe, that this excess of thickness was intended to receive the fluting generally adopted to this order, from which this temple would otherwise form a single exception. There is no appearance of any interior roof, nor any traces of timber. I should imagine that it would not be hazarding too much to assert, that this building never was finished or consecrated; to which circumstance it is probably indebted for its preservation, thus escaping both pillage and conflagrations, and that from its distance from the city, it has, like that of Metapontum, survived its total destruction.

No part of the outside of this edifice is wanting but a few stones of the pediment, detached beyond a doubt by some partial accident. The second column of the eastern front has been damaged by lightning, and repaired. The stone is a *tufa* of the same kind with that of the temple of the Lacinian Juno. The inner part is entirely empty, yet there would be something like the appearance of the fragment of a wall, had the cut stones we discovered there a more precise direction. I

sought

fought with great diligence around the temple, to see if I could discover the remains of any edifice, such as the dwellings of the priests, which were generally contiguous to the temples; but we found only two pieces of columns left by chance, with an indenting cut in one part of the layer to facilitate the lifting of these enormous masses. The plan, view, section, and representation of all the minute parts of this monument, drawn and measured, will make it much more intelligible than any verbal descriptions, which, on such subjects, must always be dry and imperfect.* The governor of Calatafimi sent us six men and three great ladders, by the aid of which, notwithstanding the violent wind that incommoded us, we attained the object of our undertaking.

After we had finished our researches, we repaired to *Calatafimi*, which is three miles distant through a tolerably rich valley, with a little river flowing at some distance in front of the famous but dreary *Segesta*. Nor is *Calatafimi* in a happier situation than the ancient city, being built on the ridge between

* See the drawings of it in the *Voyage Pittoresque des deux Siciles*.

two vallies, in its appearance from without it bears some resemblance to *Centorbi*.^a The governor, on whom I waited to return thanks, obliged the Franciscan Friars to give us two straw matrasses, on which we threw ourselves, after having made our grand repast in public as usual at the tavern.

TRAPANI.

Leaving *Calatafimi* early in the morning, we passed through a very dreary country, till we approached Mount Eryx, now called *S. Giuliano*, after skirting which, the traveller gains a prospect of *Trapani* and some islands. We reached this place about dinner time, after travelling four and twenty miles without stopping, and alighted at the house of the French Vice-Consul. *Trapani*, the ancient *Drepanum*, was built in the year of Rome 493, by Hamilcar the Carthaginian General, to receive the inhabitants of *Motya*,^b when expelled from their city by the Sicilians, in the

^a The inhabitants of *Catalafimi* are estimated at ten thousand.

^b A city situated on the coast, a little to the north of Lilybœum, now called the Isle of Saint Pantaleon.

95th olympiad. *Trapani* in its appearance resembles Gallipoli, and seems, if I may use the expression, as if moored to the continent. When the *sirocco*, or southerly wind, covers its low beach with the sea, it is entirely surrounded by water, except the causeway which crosses the salt-pits. Its present wealth, commerce, and celebrity, arises wholly from these salt-works. The salt is made here, as in Apulia, by desiccation, but without the aid of fresh water. The low beach is almost on a level with the sea in calm weather. Lesser causeways therefore have been formed a foot high, that enclose spaces communicating with each other, into which the sea water is introduced, and the sun performs the rest. The salt crystallizes on the surface of a beaten clay, and fresh sea water is admitted from time to time, till the crystallization has acquired about three inches thickness, when the salt is collected and piled up, as is practised in the salt-works of Provence. The Trapani salt is white, but very pungent, and is peculiarly excellent for the curing of fish. The salt-pits of Trapani are not worked, like those of Apulia, on the king's account; he receives only the duties of exportation, more considerable

considerable than the price of the salt, which costs almost nothing, and enables the inhabitants to cure a vast quantity of tunny. We arrived here too late to see the manner of fishing, which is very curious. The tunny taken here are much larger than those caught between Marseilles and Cette, and are more plentiful, a single *madrague* having produced this year, a hundred and fifty thousand livres, (six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds sterling), deducting all expenses. This fish of passage disappears in June and July. I know not what course they steer, but they are said to be again taken in their return, on the coasts of *Terra Nuova*, and *Puzzoli* in the month of August. Swedish, English, and some French ships, come to take in salt at Trapani; but as the price is not fixed, and is subject to arbitrary variations, the merchants prefer loading in Sardinia, though the salt is not there of so good a quality for curing. I cannot say how often they collect the salt in a season, at the pits of Hieres, but at Trapani they proceed as far as three gatherings, when the rains of autumn do not fall prematurely.

These low and marshy grounds occasion a bad smell, but without corrupting the air.

M

The

The city is reckoned among the strong places of the kingdom ; it is fortified and garrisoned, and the gates are shut in the evening. I was recommended to the Prince de *Paceco*, the governor, who introduced me to all the company. I was curious to see the women of *Trapani*, so celebrated for their beauty, and did indeed meet with one lady, who, in point of shape, nobleness, elegance, and regularity of features, might be taken for a priestess of the ancient temple of Venus *Erycina*, and from the graces of her mind, for one of our amiable Parisian females ; but she was of Irish extraction, and born in Spain : her name was *Donna Theresa Blanco*. I saw none but her at *Trapani*. Was it my fault, or, was it hers ? or was it the fault of the *Trapanese* ladies ?

A traveller, who, on the faith of *Virgil*, should expect to find antiquities at *Trapani*, would be greatly disappointed, for nothing is remaining of so celebrated a city, but the ground on which it stood. The second day after my arrival, I went out at day-break to take a view of the coast. I walked with satisfaction over the same spot where *Aeneas* landed

landed in Sicily, and where his father Anchises died. Here, said I to myself, was his fleet rescued by a miracle from the flaming brands of the Trojan women, who were wearied with following him. There did these very women beseech Æneas to take them on board his ships, when the hero recommended them to the care of king Acestes. Here stood the tomb of Anchises, and the sacred wood planted in his honour ! Nothing now, however, is to be found at Trapani in the least resembling this sacred wood ; for no spot on earth can be more barren and naked than the district around this city. Being destitute of gardens, shade, and vegetables, thirty-six thousand persons, which is the number of its inhabitants, eat no other fruits but what come to them by sea, or are brought on mules from a distant part of the country. Virgil is more intelligible in the local description he gives of the games exhibited by his hero in honour of his father. We still find the island level with the water, on which was planted the oaken branch, serving as a goal for the contending gallies. The Romans, in the first Punic war, built a mole to join this little island to the continent, in order to facilitate

the attack of Trapani. The Greeks called this island *Palios*; the Romans bestowed on it the name it now bears of *La Columbara*.

Near this, and opposite to a small rock on which is a tower, is another rock level with the water, called the *Scoglio di mal consiglio*. Here, it is said, was held that horrid council, in which the massacre of the Sicilian *Vespers* was resolved on. So many remarkable events gave birth to very different emotions in the mind; but here the imagination is left to act unassisted, for nothing is to be discovered but the places. On the second day we ascended the celebrated Mount Eryx, on which stood the temple of Venus built by Eryx, son of Butes and that goddess; a temple which became so famous, as to procure Venus the epithet of Erycina. Minos decorated it with superb sculpture, and enriched it with such noble offerings as have caused him to be supposed its founder. The victims offered themselves voluntarily at the altar. The handsomest women in the world were the priestesses; and the Roman Senators, laying aside their characteristic severity, came hither to indulge in pleasure with the beauteous Sicilian females, persuaded they should thus

thus make their offerings acceptable to the goddes, and render her propitious.

I found here indeed the steep and winding path, described by Livy, which rendered the city so difficult of access; but no city, where he places it, half way up the mountain, nor did I discover how it was possible for it to have existed there. On the summit is a large flat piece of ground, and at the edge of the declivity in the steepest part, are found the ruins of a Saracenic or Gothic castle, instead of the famous temple; and in lieu of those beautiful porticoes and handsome priestesses, of which history alone has preserved the memory, we only find some prisoners equally hideous with their prison. A hole is here shewn called the Well of Venus, which is nothing but an old cistern, such as I have seen in all the fortresses of the Saracens. I discovered however, in the wall, to the westward, four pieces of stone evidently antique from the notches formed for lifting them.

From hence we have a prospect of the whole city of Trapani and the adjacent islands, as far as *Maretimo*, the ancient *Ægades*, behind which Lutatius fought the naval battle that gave Sicily to the Romans,

and terminated the second Punic war. I went over the town without finding any thing that could trace out the figure of the ancient Eryx. Could the mountain have changed its place, and had I not discovered at the western gate, at the foundation of the Gothic walls, the remains of some ancient ones of prodigious size, I should have imagined that I had mistaken the situation of this once renowned city, which in former times was esteemed so delightful an abode ; but which now, under the name of *Giuliano*, contains only nine thousand rude inhabitants, among whom all the women appeared to me absolutely ugly. At the house of a Mr. Hernandez, I saw a collection of medals found on the spot, with Greek legends, some bearing heads of Venus, with dogs on the reverse ; others with birds and crabs ; and some again with a crab and a head. This gentleman would part with nothing. I found also some funeral urns, and pots with Greek characters, expressing, according to all appearance, the names of the manufactory or manufacturer.

Eryx was destroyed by Hamilcar, who, in the first Punic war, in the 493d year of Rome, removed

removed its inhabitants to Drepanum, which he had built not long before.

On my return to Trapani, I visited the churches without making any discoveries. They shew you some pictures of Carera, a Trapanese painter, who had studied the manner of Paul Veronese, but failed in his imitations. He has confounded his light and shade; and his colours have flown. His pictures are executed with freedom, but without colouring or correctness. In the city are three pedestrian statues in marble of Philip V. Victor Amadeus, and Charles of Bourbon.

We set out from Trapani with fresh horses, after dismissing all our superfluous attendants, and that pompous retinue, which only serves to make the traveller pay dearer for all the advantages it procures him. From Trapani to *Marsala* the country lowers; you leave the mountains at a distance, and the sea coast is almost entirely covered with salt-works. The road passes in front of *Paceco*, where they make excellent Muscadine wine, in imitation of that of Syracuse, but not so luscious. Twelve miles from Trapani, the isle of *St. Pantaleo* is seen at the distance of half a mile in the sea, in which stood the ancient *Motya*, a city built

by Hercules in honour of a Sicanian woman of that name, of whom he had been enamoured in Sicily. It afterwards became one of the strongest cities of the Carthaginians in the island. They defended it with so much obstinacy when besieged by Dionysius the Tyrant in the ninety-third olympiad, as to suffer themselves to be suspended by beams, and thus conveyed over their walls, in order to set fire with torches to the machines of the besiegers. Dionysius threw up a mole from the continent to the island, to facilitate his approaches to the place. It was at this siege the catapulta was first made use of, the effects of which so terrified the fleet of Imilco, which had advanced near the shore, that they abandoned the advantage they had over the fleet of Dionysius, and sailed away as far as Africa, as the only means of escaping a mode of attack against which they had hitherto no defence. This circumstance saved the fleet of Dionysius, which was so closely pressed, as to induce him, in order to preserve it from being burnt, to have it dragged over land, and launched again at some distance: from which we may form an idea of the size of the vessels of those days. The largest carried one hundred

dred men and four chariots, and were called ships of burden. The shore, in fact, is very proper for carrying such an expedient into execution, being very low, and the sea between the continent and the island only from three to six feet deep.

All the shallows are now occupied by salt pits, where the finest salt of the country is made. We hired a bark and went to the island, which is a mile long, and half a mile wide. It formerly belonged to the Jesuits, and is now the king's. It contains only one single farm, producing about one hundred pistoles. We sought in vain for any remains of the demolished city; we found only a few antique stones, of which a modern bastion had been built, now likewise in ruins. We saw however a great number of pieces of *mattoni* scattered over the fields, some fragments of Greek vases of the the most delicate workmanship, and on a rough stone, two feet high by fifteen inches wide, the following Punic inscription:

Si 4 9 9 9 7
A 8 H 3 9

The

The peasants who were at work told us that a great quantity of silver and copper coins had been found here, and they gave me two; one a Carthaginian coin, having on one side a woman's head in a very beautiful style, and on the reverse a horse; the other Syracusan, but almost totally effaced. They gave me also some points of javelins and arrows in bronze. Those of the arrows were triangular, in the form of a lengthened cone, with a beard behind each angle, which rendered them very difficult to extract, and a wound made by them extremely dangerous. From hence we proceeded to *Marsala*, six miles farther.

M A R S A L A.

Marsala was the ancient *Lilybæum*, the principal fortress of the Carthaginians in Sicily; a place never taken from them; the only city that resisted Pyrrhus when he passed into this island in the 475th year of Rome; besieged ineffectually during five years by the Romans, to whom it was not ceded till after the naval victory of Lutatius, gained behind the Isle *Ægades*, the modern *Marettimo*, which is opposite to *Marsala*, and seems to be the key of that

that immense harbour. It is formed by rocks, little low islands, tongues of land, and sand banks, which intersecting each other, break off the waves on all sides, and form a vast semi-circle, where the sea is always calm. Virgil has described it as if he had been on the spot, when he says, that the rocks on a level with the water, and the sand banks render the passage so dangerous, that if, instead of doubling the islands, the mariner wishes to keep near the shore and cross the harbour, the same banks of sand, which contribute to its safety, render such a passage dangerous. It was from this port that the formidable fleet commanded by Scipio Africanus sailed, when he set out for Africa in the second Punic war, and the 548th year of Rome.

The beauty of the harbour induced the Saracens to call it *Marfala*; which in their language signified the *Port of God*: but of this famous port, and impregnable city, not a relic remains to furnish a subject for a drawing. Nothing can be less picturesque, nor any place exhibit a less noble appearance than the modern Lilybæum, yet they have very recently begun some fortifications here. Though large, it has no importance in its exterior;

the number

ber of inhabitants is estimated at five and twenty thousand, yet its streets appear unpeopled. We took up our lodgings with the Franciscans, and I had letters of recommendation to the Comte de Grignano, at whose house I saw a tolerably handsome vase of alabaster. I went over the city with him, and found nothing antique but a few ruins of the ancient walls, to the west of the town, built with enormous masses of stone, which it was impossible before the invention of cannon, for any machine to shake. In front of these walls were deep ditches, forty feet wide, hewn out of the rock, some parts of which are still existing, and have an awful appearance. There is no longer any anchorage for shipping; and of the port in general nothing is remaining but the form. It is now fit only for the reception of small barks. From its nature, at no time very deep, and neglected for many ages, it was entirely destroyed, as it is said, by Don John of Austria, who, unable to defend it, did not wish to leave it open to the Africans, who are only at fifty leagues distance. At present, therefore, Marsala only has a small road, to which vessels come to load with tunny, and the ashes of kali, made there in abundance,

and

and forming the principal and almost sole object of the commerce of the country. This plant is sown in the month of March. It has a stalk like that of buck wheat, and a leaf in the shape of a thorn, an inch long, round and pulpy. At the budding of the leaf the flower and seed appear. The plant is pulled up in August, dried in the sun to a certain degree, then burnt as green as possible without the aid of any combustible, and always on the same heap. The residue becomes hardened in a lump, and takes the consistence in which we see it. The merchants of Marseilles come hither to purchase it for their soap manufactories.^a

M A Z A R A.

We set out from Marsala to visit *Mazara* fourteen miles off, following the sea coast, through a country as flat and dry as Apulia. *Mazara* has not a bad external appearance. Several convents, and steeples richly ornamented, promise a town, more elegant and

^a The city of Marsala has taken for its arms the impress of the ancient coins, which is on one side a head of Apollo, and on the other a lyre with a Greek inscription.

agreeable

agreeable than it is found to be on entering its winding and narrow streets. The only square which is before the cathedral has about it something picturesque. *Mazarum*, of which little is said in the history of Sicily, appears to have been much inhabited by the Romans ; for a great number of their tombs and inscriptions are found here. In the cathedral are some valuable sarcophagi, particularly one, on which is represented in bas relief an engagement of cavalry, sculptured in a grand and beautiful style, as well in point of composition, as from its design and workmanship, which may induce us to attribute it to the Greeks. There is another allegorical design, which every body explains in his own way ; this however is more defaced, and never was handsome : the subject alone, which is very complicated, is admirably calculated to perplex the antiquary. A third represents Meleager, but it is so bad as to resemble the most pitiful Gothic sculpture. At the convent of S. Michael we find a small Roman tomb of the family Albinus, and another fragment of an inscription in beautiful characters on marble :

L. A. CILIO. L. F.
RVFO.

As

As also the following :

D. M.

HERENNIAE

MAVRICAE.

ΙΡΕΚΔΑΙΑΟΔΟΙ

ΟΤΑΔΕΡΙΟ ΟΝΔΙ

ΤΑΗΡ ΑΝΤΙΟΝ

ΩΝΑΡ ΕΧΕΡΚΕΤΑΝ.

D. M. CLAVDIAE SABINAE

L. METHIVS PROCVLVS

CONIVGI KARISSIMAE B.

CLEMENTISSIMO ET

VICTORIOSISSIMO

D. N. FLAVIO. VALERIO

CONSTANTINO MAXIMO

PIO FELICI INVICTO. AVG.

BETITIVS PERPETVVS

V. C. CORR. PROV. SICIL.

DEVOTVS NUMINI. MAES

TATI QVE EJVS

SEMPER DICATVS.

M. MARCELLO

CLARIC. BIO

SEM

Mazarum was laid waste by the Saracens, and was taken from them by Earl Roger, who on that occasion made a vow to build a church if he obtained the victory. The church no longer exists ; but on the portal of another, erected on the same spot, the Earl is represented beating down a Saracen. At *Mazara* have been found some Punic, and a great many Roman coins,

coins, and those of the Saracens in their tombs. There are but seven thousand inhabitants at *Mazara*, without trade or manufacture. Their chief cultivation is that of cotton. There is no harbour, but the sea enters by a channel above half a mile into the country, which would form an excellent shelter for shipping, if merchants had any inducement to come hither: but this canal serves only to feed some large fish which the inhabitants eat without disturbance. On leaving *Mazarum*, at about a mile from the town, you see on the left of the road, a church called *Santa Maria dell' alto*, in the sacristy of which is a small tomb of alabaster, that serves as a basin for the priests to wash their hands in. It is of Roman work, and in a very beautiful taste.

We resumed our journey to reach the ruins of *Selinus*, called the *Pileri*, eighteen miles from *Mazara*. From that town to the village of *Campo-Bello*, the country is as desart as an uninhabited island; the earth is covered only with little dwarf palm-trees, called *Fan Palms*, which are used for brooms. I know not whether it is of them that Virgil speaks, and which he shews his hero from his fleet in the fields of *Selinus*; but he must in that case have

have had most excellent eyes, for the loftiest of these palm-trees is not two feet high.

SELINEUS.

At two miles distance from Selinus we discover its ruins, which resemble two vast magazines, containing all the materials necessary for building a city. On approaching, they retain the same appearance. At the first view it is impossible to distinguish any plan; the eye discovers nothing but shafts of columns, some fluted, and others not; scattered capitals, entablatures, some of them finished, and others which seem still in a rude state. At the largest temple, we seem to behold the work of giants; so diminutive does the admiring spectator feel himself by the side of the smallest fragments, that he can scarcely imagine these enormous masses, which the eye itself is unaccustomed to measure, to have been formed and moved by men. Every column is a tower, every capital a whole rock. It seems rather to have been intended to bid defiance to the gods, or terrify mankind, than to build a temple to the glory of

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the one, and to excite the admiration of the other.

On passing from the three temples situated on this side to the part opposite, we are no less astonished at finding immense walls, and in the same style, which seem to serve as foundations only to other temples not less colossal. We are now tempted to believe that the Selinuntians dwelt only in temples, or that they were a people of Priests wholly consecrated to the worship of the deities. Ruins, fragments, and columns, are visible even into the sea. On that side there is a watch tower, where we discovered the general plan of the city, in the form of a horse-shoe, the extremities of which were terminated by two bastions advancing even to the sea shore. Three temples on each side occupied the lateral parts, and were doubtless its hallowed quarters: the left side was consecrated to the temples of the gods; the right, possibly, to public edifices. The latter had a separate enclosure. Between them was the harbour, which was entirely shut in, and is now choked with sand. The bottom of the horse-shoe appears to have formed the quarter appropriated to the public. Nothing

is there discoverable but some inconsiderable fragments of *mattoni*, the traces of a few small buildings, wells and cisterns, all so covered with sand, as to render it impracticable to distinguish any thing beyond the general form; which however enables us to judge of the magnificence of the whole, and of the effect it must have produced.

We met with a sad falling off, however, from this magnificence, when it became necessary to retire, and night compelled us to look out for lodgings. Our only shelter was an old stable, which had been converted into a kitchen; the floor we lay on was a damp and fetid earth, that kept us all night in a cold sweat, like that of a fainting fit. A melancholy lamp, kept alive only by a little oil we had spared from our supper, afforded us a dull glimmering that served but to shew us our deplorable situation, and that of two poor sick wretches, who taking refuge in the same hovel, continued sighing, complaining, and vomiting every instant. This picture, for once, shook my careless disposition respecting health, and I passed the night in all the horrid apprehensions of a contagious disease.

We rose early in the morning, anxious to enjoy a less polluted air.

We first repaired to the temples. The eye, in time, becomes accustomed to behold the most colossal objects, and presently to measure them. We now began to discriminate plans where we had at first seen nothing but piles of ruins without order. On an accurate examination, we clearly discovered that the fall of these buildings had neither been a demolition, nor in any way the work of man, their prodigious size and solidity placing them out of the reach of the momentary rage of the conqueror, or even the lapse of ages. It is manifest from the regularity still so remarkable in the present state of the ruin, from the parallel overthrow of the columns, and the straight lines in which the fragments of the entablature in general are found, that they could have been overturned only by the violent shock of an earthquake, which has thrown all three of them from west to east, with an inclination to the north ; and not by the rage of Hannibal, who, as M. de Burigni tells us, refused to spare them, though entreated by Empedion, whom he held nevertheless in such esteem, as to permit, on his account,

account, the Selinuntian fugitives, who had escaped the carnage, to return and form a settlement on the ruins of the city, on engaging to pay a tribute.

In the smallest temple, which is in the middle, all the first layers of its columns are preserved in their places. These were all fluted, resting without bases on a socle that formed the third row of the stylobate, on which the whole edifice was raised. This appears to have been the most complete, and the highest finished, but is more demolished in the inside than the others. This is less distinguishable, as the smaller fragments have been more easily carried off; but so simple and uniform were the works of the Greeks, that the knowledge of one only of their buildings nearly suffices to make us acquainted with them all. The variety of the parts caused the difference of effects in their elevation, such as the filleting of their columns, the dimension of their capitals more or less flattened, and the diameter of the entablatures; all of which are very easy to measure here, as the layers of which the columns were formed have been preserved with them in their fall,

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frequently with their capitals, and sometimes even the entablatures.

We next proceeded to the second temple, and with a little difficulty, made it out as we had done the former. One of the angles of the internal wall of this latter is still standing, and these angles were decorated with pilasters, surmounted with capitals. This temple was more considerable in its parts, and longer in its form.

It is unnecessary to observe that this, which stood by the side of the other, was parallel with it, since all the ancient temples were built from east to west. Having gratified our curiosity respecting these two, we visited the ruins of the largest, which appeared so awful and even terrible on a first view: we began by measuring its parts, the diameter of its columns, &c. and investigated its plan in the most satisfactory and most indisputable manner, though it had several peculiarities, such as a dimension of greater length, occupied in the first place by a peristyle of three columns in depth: of the third or interior row of these columns, one is still standing entire. Behind this column a pilaster terminated an advanced structure that joined the wall in which was

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the great gate. The interior was decorated with a small order, some fragments of which we found likewise in columns, entablatures, and Doric cornices. In the angles of the wall to the westward were large pilasters, in the proportions of the external order. The columns of the first row of the eastern part were fluted, and the others of the same peristyle plain. In the circumference we observed that one was almost constantly fluted, and the other plain; which I cannot imagine was intended by way of ornament, but rather proves that the intention was to flute them all, and that times and circumstances had left this work imperfect, as too often happens to edifices of this sort, which are so long in building, and require such sums of money before they can be brought to a certain degree of perfection, as to render it matter of the greatest astonishment by what means such little republicks were able to provide for undertakings of this magnitude: a circumstance which may justify us in believing that they sacrificed to the glory of erecting these monuments all the magnificence they might have bestowed upon their private houses. We took a pleasure in conjecturing and ad-

miring the variety of means employed to raise such prodigious masses, and in reasoning concerning the machines now lost to us, by which they were raised and placed, and which prove by their effects, that in spite of all our fortunate discoveries, we have not surpassed the ancients in the mechanick art. Some of these pieces are pierced entirely through ; others have only square holes, into which the cramps entered which held the block the faster according to its weight ; others received iron chains into grooves of a cylindrical form, by which they were lifted up, as if by two handles.

It blew a violent *Sirocco* that covered us with a moisture not to be dried, even by an August sun. The atmosphere was so heavy as to overcome us, and I experienced for the first time, the influence of the climate upon the mind : I now began to conceive the nature of oriental effeminacy, and Sicilian apathy. We were unable to stir, and went and threw ourselves upon our litter, resigning our wearied bodies to the hungry fleas which were lying in wait for us. It is not without reason they call this place *Terra dei pulici*, the land of fleas ; for we were obliged to fatten thousands

sands of them with our best blood every time we laid down to rest,

The wind changing in the evening, we went to the other part of the city, which is on another eminence to the westward. There are three temples likewise in this quarter, the plans of which are not less distinguishable, except that nearest the sea, which from its being very considerably smaller, has more easily been plundered of its ruins. This small one differs from the others, by a more extended capital, and by three smaller indented fillets that intersect the fluting. In the middle one the columns were all of a single stone, and are for the most part preserved, all lying in a parallel direction; which may serve to prove what I have above affirmed, that nothing but an earthquake would have overthrown these edifices. Those of which I am speaking have fallen from south to north, inclining a little to the east, and have preserved still more regularity, having fallen sideways. The nave of the third was extremely narrow, and the peristyle much wider. At the entrance, there is a square cavity, the use of which it is difficult to conjecture, but it may have been only an excavation in the area, of

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a later date, to sound the depth of its foundation.

A cursory inspection of the plans will better enable the reader to comprehend their form, and compare them, than the most minute verbal description.* We obtained such a thorough knowledge of the plan of this part, as to be able to take drawings of it. We discovered almost all the walls of the quarters of the three temples, which there can be no doubt was the principal quarter of the city, as that of the senate might have been, or that of the soldiers, or the priests. We distinguished two flights of steps which mounted from the harbour to the temples, with the beautiful stone glacis which served as a basis to them, and must have added greatly to their effect; for it is to be observed that these masses, apparently rustic, are in architecture what the contrasted fresco is in painting, which produces the happiest effect when at its proper point. It must be allowed too, that the ancients greatly surpassed us in the

* See the fourth volume of the *Voyage Pittoresque des deux Siciles.*

management of this effect in architecture: their monuments were always placed so as to present themselves only in the most striking points of view; on eminences, on walls, or on large bastions, as in the present case. The fortified part of the city that overlooked the sea exists no longer. It was probably Hannibal who destroyed it, for he permitted the remaining inhabitants to return, only on condition of their not restoring the fortifications.

We traced columns even into the sea, and, in the upper part of the streets, found small caverns without roofs, but formed of large stones resting horizontally on pillars, and on the surface small columns of an interior decoration, and to the westward walls almost entire. We employed two days in measuring all this, and at length exhausted the resources furnished us by the beautiful ruins of one of the finest cities in Sicily, in which the arts had been carried to the greatest perfection. Selinus was built by the inhabitants of Megara a hundred years after they had settled in Sicily, was constantly the rival of Segesta, and fell the first victim to the vengeance of the Carthaginians for the loss of the battle of

Himera,

Himera, and the death of Hamilcar. Seventy years after that event, Hannibal, the grandson of Hamilcar, laid siege to it, when the inhabitants defended themselves with extraordinary valour. During the siege, the Spaniards, in the pay of the Carthaginians, entered by a breach. Some women perceiving this, set up loud cries. The Selinuntians, thinking the town was taken, abandoned the walls, but defended themselves in the streets, till night, when they were obliged to submit to numbers ; and the city was pillaged and burnt with all the remaining inhabitants. The destruction of it might perhaps furnish a striking subject for a historical painting ; and the representation might in some measure be rendered exact and faithful. The edifices and ruins which still exist, might be shewn by the faint light of the conflagration, while the parts of the city, of which no traces remain, might seem as if concealed by the flames and darkness. We might contemplate the massacre of the inhabitants, their mutilated bodies, their heads borne to the general on spears, the cruelties exercised on the old men, women and children, and all the horrors of war as waged by barbarians.

SCIACCA.

S C I A C C A.

After exhausting the whole district of its provisions, we set out from Selinus in the middle of the night dying with hunger. We first passed through little woods, afterwards crossed the river Belici, the ancient *Hypsa*, over a bridge, where we found an unwholesome air and an intolerable stench, and next came to two rivulets without bridges. To the left we passed by *Menfrici*, then crossed another river called the *Corbo*, and anciently the *Atys*. At length, after travelling eighteen miles, sometimes on a good road, and at others led astray by the darkness of the night, and ignorant guides, we arrived in the morning at *Sciaccia*, a town situated on the declivity of a hill, and with a very agreeable appearance, but its inside by no means corresponding with what it promised. It was the ancient *Thermæ Selinuntiæ*, but has retained no traces of its antiquity. Though famous for its manufactures of earthen vases held in such request by the Greeks, I was unable to discover one. It would have given me great pleasure, however, to have found a vase which I might have imagined at least to have been

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the work of Charinus, the father of Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, one of the greatest men and finest geniuses Sicily ever produced. He was born, we know, at Sciacca, and was the son of a potter of that city. His father having consulted the oracles concerning the dreams by which he had been disturbed during the pregnancy of his wife, was told, that the child she should bear would lay waste his country. Sacrificing his paternal tenderness to the good of his fellow-citizens, he determined to expose his son, and leave him to perish; but his wife, more of a mother than a patriot, prevailed on the persons employed to execute this design, to preserve the life of her child, and convey him to the house of his uncle Heraclides, by whom he was privately brought up. The young Agathocles daily increased in beauty and strength, and when he was seven years old, his uncle celebrating a sacrifice in his house, invited his brother-in-law to be present at the ceremony. Charinus perceives Agathocles, and his eyes seem riveted on the boy. The mother, who was on the watch, artfully reminded him, that her son, if living, would be of the same age. Tears flow from the eyes of Charinus, he ca-

refuses his son without knowing him; and, while he affectionately views the child, reproaches himself with his cruelty, and gives way to all the violent emotions of affliction and despair. The mother seizes the moment, discovers to him the imposition, and the transported father takes home with him his son, determined to risque every event. History scarcely affords a subject for the painter so interesting as this scene might be rendered by the pencil of a master, and I cannot but express my surprise that it never has been painted.

But to return to Sciacca. We went out of the town to see the baths, no part of which is ancient but the spring. The water is scalding hot, sulphureous, with a yellow mud, and a slight vitriolic tincture. It proceeds from a rock of the whiteness and levity of chalk, the substance of which is a stone changed from its natural state by the vitriolic acid, in the same manner as the lava of the Pisciarelli in the vicinity of Naples. Close to this spring is another of cold water, said to be a cure for the itch. It is salt, a circumstance not extraordinary, as all the stone of the mountain whence it proceeds is pungent to the taste,

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like the earth of a salt mine. We ascended the mountain on which the hot baths are situated: they were planned, and built, as it is said, by Dædalus, that universal genius, the inventor of all the arts, every where courted, and expelled from every place, and who, after becoming no less infamous for his crimes than celebrated for his talents, took refuge with Cocalus, king of the Sicanians, to escape the vengeance of Minos, who was in pursuit of him for having rendered practicable the monstrous amour of his queen Pasiphæ with a bull. Some traditions relate that these were the very stoves in which Cocalus stifled Minos, in order to free himself from the pressing solicitations with which he urged him to give up Dædalus.

Be this as it may, these baths are situated on the summit of a mountain which overlooks Sciacca, at three miles distance from that city. The approach to it is tolerably commodious. There is an abbey here which serves by way of hospitium. The abbot does not reside there, but receives from it an annual revenue of four hundred guineas, leaving a few brother hermits, who perform the service of the saint of the place, do the duty of the church, have the care of the baths, and receive

ceive the charitable alms of the sick persons who frequent them. The stoves are extremely curious : they are in a kind of grotto, which has an aperture of about eight feet square, from which issues a hot wind that covers the patient with moisture, and produces an immediate and gentle perspiration. The wind is not so warm and powerful at the bottom of the grotto, as at the entrance, toward which the current of the air seems directed. This vapour, occasioned in all probability by a volcanic fire, appears to rush from the centre of the mountain, and either to have found, or forced its way through the rock. It is without either smell or colour. Its density is greatest at the bottom of the grotto, and it seems to acquire additional heat on coming into contact with the external air, and when loaded with the heavy vapours of the atmosphere. The grotto is surrounded with seats hewn out of the rock for the convenience of bathers. I was desired to examine some Greek writing, rendered illegible, as they said, by time ; but all I discovered, and nothing could be more evident, was the marks of the chissel with which these benches had been hewn, in parallel lines, and which having been polished

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and worn by the sick persons who have sat down there, may seem to bear some resemblance to Gothic characters, but never could pass for Greek, except with lovers of the marvellous.

This first grotto communicates with a second by a roof so low, that you must creep on your belly to enter it. No use is made of this grotto by the sick. The monk who accompanied me, told me it was accessible, but did not chuse to follow, when I threw off my coat, and passed through with a lantern. I found this second grotto less and narrower than the other, and the wind, which was more violent there than in the former, extinguished my light, though in a very close lantern. I was obliged therefore to grope my way back. I inquired for torches, but none were to be had; and being doubtful if I lost my way, of acting the part of Minos without any prospect of utility, I thought it prudent to decline a second expedition into these subterraneous caverns. I was told that there were no less than four exactly alike, except that in the third, the roof was supported by a pillar; that it was impossible to discover whence the wind proceeded, and that the same

same was observable in many other parts of the mountain. What is still more extraordinary is, that the same phænomenon has continually been remarked from the time of Dædalus. By the stove they shew you another grotto, where an old hermit, after passing his life in a hot bath, died with the reputation of a saint, so that he is become the patron of Sciacca, and his image may no longer be seen without six lighted tapers.

From the platform of the convent, one of the finest and most extensive sea prospects that possibly can be imagined presents itself. The good fathers, therefore, from their situation, are acquainted with the history of all the piratical expeditions of the coast of Barbary, and nothing else. They told us they could sometimes discover not only Cape Bon in Africa, but the Gulph of Tunis, the ancient Carthage. The weather was too thick, however, to enable us to verify this assertion.

We returned to Sciacca, whence we set out the next day ; and, following the sea, still continued to find the same kind of calcined white and saline rock. We passed the mouth of the *Calatabellota*, formerly the *Crimisus*, with the waters of which the inhabitants overflow their

beautiful rice grounds which we found in flower. The same use is made of the *Macasoli*, the ancient *Allaba*, and of the *Platoni*, once called the *Camicus*, which falls into the sea, near *Capo-Bianco*, so named, no doubt, from its colour. On this promontory the companions of Minos are said to have interred the body of that prince, which was restored to them by Cocalus, who told them that he had been suffocated by the steam of the bath. The Sicilians having burnt their ships, built a city called *Minoa*, from the name of their king. This colony seems at last to have been dispersed. Doricus, son of Alexander, King of Sparta, coming to claim the kingdom of Eryx, as the successor of Hercules,^a built Heraclea on the spot on which Minoa had before stood: but the Segestians and Carthaginians, jealous of the new city, united their forces, and de-

^a Hercules, coming into Sicily, sent to defy to a wrestling match, King Eryx, the son of Venus, of a gigantic stature, and proportionable strength. Eryx accepted the challenge, and wagered his kingdom against the Cows of Geryon, that had brought Hercules thither, and to the possession of which immortality was annexed. This hero having vanquished Eryx, left the inhabitants in possession of the sovereignty of their country, until one of his descendants should appear and claim it.

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stroyed it; which accounts for so few remains of it being now to be found. We only discovered, in that part of the district which we crossed, some pieces of *mattoni*, and one single fragment of a Greek vase.

We arrived to dinner at *Monte-Allegro*, a sorry village, on a rock surrounded by other barren rocks, all of talc, from which the people of the neighbourhood procure sand and stones, and make lime and plaster for building houses. From *Sciacca* to *Monte-Allegro* is four and twenty miles; and we had still a journey of eighteen to reach *Girgenti*; but as we were told that *Siculiana* was situated in an unwholesome air, we resolved to proceed with all expedition to *Girgenti*, without regarding the lateness of the hour. We passed through a very wild country, with desert vallies, intersected by rivulets and lakes of fetid water; the soil and stone still continuing of the same nature, that is to say, alternately composed of talc, and that calcinated and saline stone, with which the whole country abounds from *Sciacca* to beyond the harbour of *Girgenti*. As soon as we had passed the large town of *Siculiana*, the country assumed a richer and more em-

bellished appearance, but night coming on prevented us from seeing it,

GIRGENTI.

It was dark when we reached the mole of Girgenti, four miles distant from the city, to which we ascended by a tolerably good road, passing between Mount Tauro, on the left, where the Carthaginians were encamped at the second siege of Agrigentum, and the Campo Romano on the right; a name this place has retained from the Roman camp, formed here at the same siege. We passed the river Acragas over a large bridge, and arrived at Girgenti by the same steep and winding road, which Dædalus contrived with so much art, as to render the citadel of Cocalus impregnable, it being in the power of two men only to stop the progress of a whole army. This road and the gate have been widened only within these five and twenty years. The traces of the ancient road, and of the rock, as it formerly was, are still to be seen.

It was eleven at night, and the servants of Gelias were no longer to be found here waiting to conduct us to the palace of their master.

master.^b We had this day a sad proof of Agrigentine hospitality; for after leading our horses, already much fatigued, about the dangerous streets of the town, and being refused admittance by the servants of the French consul, who would not so much as come and speak to us through the gate, we were obliged to return to the suburbs; where meeting with a like refusal from all the inns we knocked at, which would have nothing to do with us, we took up our lodgings in a granary, and could only procure a water melon for our supper; after which we laid ourselves down to sleep upon a heap of corn. The next day I attempted to change our quarters, and delivered my letters of recommendation, three of which were for the bishop, Cardinal Branciforte, who happened then to be on his visitation. Fortunately his vicar general undertook to find me lodgings, and procure me accommodations

^b Gelias, a rich individual of Agrigentum, was so hospitable as to send his servants to the gates to wait for strangers, and bring them to his house, where they were treated with equal magnificence and generosity. Five hundred horsemen being compelled one day by a storm to take refuge at Agrigentum, he not only received and accommodated them all in his palace, but made each of them a present of a mantle the next morning.

at the Foundling-hospital. Near our residence was the cathedral, situated on the summit of Mount Camico, and on the ground on which the ancient citadel stood.

Our first visit was to the famous bas-relief, so well known, and so much both praised and censured, and which has at length attained so great a degree of celebrity, as to become the first curiosity of the kind in Sicily. It is at present made use of as a baptismal font. We examined it with great attention, and all agreed in opinion that it by no means merited its reputation; on examining it again still more closely, and observing the incongruities in the execution with respect to beauty of style and disposition, the clumsy finishing of the parts in general, and the want of uniformity in the whole, we concurred in supposing this work either to have been begun by a skilful artist, who had bestowed different degrees of finishing on each front, and that it had been compleated many ages after, in the decline of the arts; or that this tomb, having been damaged by time, attempts had been made to restore the parts that had been destroyed. Two sides of it still have a great effect at a distance; but on the whole, it has never been a work worthy

worthy of the best times of Greece. The subject bears so striking a resemblance to that of the tragedy of Hippolytus, so admirably imitated from Euripides, by Racine, that it is scarcely possible to doubt but that it was this story the artist meant to represent.

The first side of it, the most striking, and the best finished, represents a hero ready to mount on horseback, a woman quitting him with regret, or who wishes to retain him, some dogs, &c. On the opposite part, which is the other great side, is a hunting of the wild boar (this side at least is useless to the action); on the third, a man entangled in the harness of his frightened horses, and dragged on the ruins of his broken car; on the fourth, and best preserved, is a woman in despair, and fainting, whom several others are assisting and condoling. As the general opinion, however, will have it to be a tomb, and it is pretended that it was brought from Carthage, with many other valuable things which were sent by Scipio to the Agrigentines, after the capture of that city, it has been supposed to have been the tomb of Phintias, tyrant of Agrigentum, who was driven from the throne, and died at Tunis, being killed, while hunting, by a wild boar.

boar. This conjecture seems particularly favoured by that part which represents the hunting of the boar, since it is to be remarked, that the boar is there sculptured in the very shape and attitude in which it is found on all the coins struck under the reign of that prince. But Phintias, who died in exile, and was abhorred by his people, can scarcely be imagined to have found any one to lament his death, or any sculptor at Tunis to erect so pompous a monument to his memory. But in allegory as in metaphysics, every person sees, or thinks he has a right to see, whatever pleases his imagination, or seems to support a preconceived opinion. Why might it not as well have represented the history of Adonis, with Venus endeavouring to dissuade him from the chace, and her despair after the death of her lover ? In the archives of the same cathedral is a superb Greek vase, which is sufficiently elegant to make us regret that so few of them are now found in Sicily.

We next went to see the ruins of the temple of *Giove Polieno*, which are not far distant, and are the only remains of any ancient edifice existing in the modern city; but these are, indeed, so inconsiderable, that you must look
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very narrowly to discover a few layers of a large building, which serves at present for the foundation of the church, named *Santa Maria dei Greci*. The modern structure has entirely covered or disfigured the ancient. This monument therefore with respect to its plan or its minuter parts, must be considered as no longer existing; and the remaining traces of it, merely serve to point out where it stood, nothing which can give any idea of its plan being now visible. It was built by Phalaris, who, becoming powerful at Agrigentum, and being entrusted with the building of this temple, applied part of the money in attaching creatures to his person, levied troops under the pretext that they were necessary to guard the treasures entrusted to his care, pretended to be attacked, entrenched himself, and concluded by usurping the sovereignty, which he held sixteen years; exercising, in that period, every species of the most refined cruelty, and becoming celebrated for his monstrous inhumanities. He made the Bull, which bore his name; and at length rendered himself so hateful to his subjects, as to oblige them to kill him. His memory was held in such abhorrence by the Agrigentines, that the colour of blue became

came odious to them, merely from his having clothed his guards in blue uniforms.

We went over the hilly city of Girgenti without discovering any thing worth mentioning. Its present situation, on a mountain, renders almost all the streets impassible, not only for carriages but for mules. The modern town occupies only the ground on which the citadel of ancient Agrigentum stood. Nothing now remains of that citadel, first built by Dædalus, to secure the treasures of Cocalus, king of the Sicani, one of the first people known to have inhabited Sicily. To the south of this citadel, on the declivity of Mount Camico, was situated the capital of Cocalus, which at last became a part of Agrigentum, being joined to the walls of the principal city by a bridge over the river Acragas, and serving as a covered communication between the city and the citadel, to which it was also united by another covered way. From this citadel we discovered nothing but the declivity of the rock on which the walls that enclosed part of the castle of Cocalus were built. The whole of this rock was excavated, and formed a subterraneous labyrinth with several issues, whence secret sallies might be made. We descended by a cord and

and a pulley into this cavern, which is of vast dimensions, and where, without the greatest precaution, there is no little danger of losing one's self. It consists of a kind of galleries, pierced in the shape of a quincunx, forming square chambers at each intersection, with four equal porticoes, the whole rudely hewn out of a tufa, mixed with shells, which is so soft, that it may be cut with a knife, but hardens in the air. The proximity and commodiousness of these materials for building gave rise probably to this excavation, whence, to all appearance, the stones have been taken, which were formerly made use of to build the castle and the citadel; and the galleries may have afterward been extended, in order to discover openings half way up the hill, to be made use of in military operations. But had this been the original intention of the work, it would have been as easy to finish it better, and by that means render the military use of it surer and more commodious. Besides, we nowhere discovered any but the rude work of the instrument employed in raising beds of this tender substance; an operation performed in the manner I have described, when speaking of the quarries of Apulia.

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At day break, the next morning, we descended into the real *Agrigentum*, built by the inhabitants of *Gela*, one hundred and eight years after the foundation of the latter city by a Rhodian colony, and forty years after that of *Syracuse*. We first went as far as the eastern angle of the south part of the city, where stands the temple of Juno Lucina, elevated on a large base, which serves as the basis of the whole edifice, and forms a platform to the eastward and westward of the temple. On this side, which is the entrance, this platform was ascended by two lateral stair-cases of six steps, intersecting the middle of the three graduated layers of stone which formed the total elevation of the base; on this sub-base are the four steps, on which rest the pillars which are of the Dorick order, fluted and without bases, forming an oblong square of thirteen columns in depth, by six in front. Under the peristyle is an open portico, formed by two pilasters at the angles, and two columns. At the bottom of this second peristyle is the gate of the temple. This building, though greatly decayed, still exhibits a most beautiful and picturesque ruin. The thirteen columns of the northern side

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were still existing with its entablature, at the beginning of this century; but six of them have fallen at two different times, within the last six years, and three others are so shaken, and in so dangerous a state, that there is no hope they can stand long. Nothing but a climate like this, where neither frost nor thaw produces any dilatation, or contraction in bodies, could enable them to last a year. On the western front, there are three whole columns, and three variously damaged: the part that served by way of entrance is almost entirely ruined. At the western angle of the north front, there is in the sub-base, a little square door, which opened into a subterraneous gallery on the same plan with the upper one, running round the body of the temple, and communicating with the inside by the two stair-cases near the gate. This was probably the entrance for the priests. From this ruin we had unquestionably the finest prospects the country affords. From its effect, as it now stands, we may judge what the temple must have been when perfect, and how noble and how light this architecture, which appears heavy to eyes accustomed to the modern style, must have really

really appeared, from the elevation and grandeur of its base.

From hence we passed to the temple of Concord, by far the best preserved, and the only one on which some care is bestowed. It is in the same direction with that of Juno Lucina, placed like that under the walls of the city, and built on the same plan, except that it has no sub-base, and that the lateral walls within the temple, have six arched doorways on each side. Fortunately, they have thought proper to lodge a saint in this temple, whose altar, though it hides the gate, has inspired so much veneration for the sanctity of the place, as to induce them to keep it in some kind of repair, so that it still possesses in their original state all its columns, both its pediments, and wants nothing but a few fragments of its lateral entablature, and roof. This temple, situated on a natural eminence, is one of the most beautiful remains left us of antiquity. Its effect is truly grand in every point of view, and it is in a rare and highly valuable state of preservation.

From the temple of Concord we made the circuit of the walls, of which there remains nothing but the part built upon the solid rock,

rock, the basis and foundation of those very lofty and celebrated walls, which Virgil has made his hero discover long before they existed, since they were built only under the reign of Theron, after the battle of Himera, and by the Carthaginians who were made prisoners in that battle, whilst Gelon reigned at Syracuse: a period much later to the voyage of Æneas: but the Poet only meant perhaps the castle of Cocalus.

These walls are either entirely lined with burial places cut out of the tufa, and even the very body of the wall itself, which must have contributed considerably to weaken them, and to hasten their destruction. I know not whether this practice, and the form of these sepulchres be Grecian, but I have principally observed them in places inhabited by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, particularly at *Solentum*. I likewise found the same kind of sepulchre on *Mount Tauro*, where the Carthaginians lay encamped eight months. They are cut in the shape of troughs one above the other in the wall, and sometimes arched. There are others which are plain or circular chambers, fifteen feet in diameter, with a vent hole in the roof to ad-

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mit light or air, and the whole lined with burial places, without order, hollowed out, all round, beneath the surface of the earth, and so near each other, that in many places they are only separated by an interval of two inches. It is scarcely possible to believe that the Agrigentines, who have shewn such ingenuity and refinement in all their productions, after raising walls with so much labour and magnificence, should have adopted a practice so ridiculous and so inevitably destructive of their own work. I carefully examined every part of these burying-places, to see whether I could discover any Gothick paintings in them; but I could find neither pictures, coins, nor vases. I was assured, however, that long swords have been found beside the bodies; but this can give us no certain idea of the age in which they were buried.

These lofty walls, which, according to Diodorus, were twenty-five cubits high, must have hid the temples, and greatly injured their effect. We went out by a breach, and entered into the country, where are still to be seen the foundations, and some remains of that great number of beautiful tombs, which

history

history informs us Himilco destroyed, in the first siege of Agrigentum to fill up the ditches of the walls, and to facilitate the approach of his warlike machines. Near this place stood the temple of *Aesculapius*, though it may seem rather whimsical, that the god of medicine should have his temple among tombs. Nothing of this edifice is remaining but the pilaster of the northern angle, with two columns let into the wall; some fluted columns without bases, with the ranges on which they rested. This temple, when entire, may have borne some resemblance, in its plan, to the *Maison Quarree* at Nismes, the finest monument existing perhaps of the perfection to which the architecture of the ancients attained. A farm-house, called *La Casa di Favata*, has been built against it, and in this house there is a stair-case of the temple still intire.

It was to the southward of this temple that half of the Roman army lay, whilst the double siege was carrying on of the city, and part of the Carthaginian forces, commanded by Hannibal, who was encamped under the walls, at the sea gate, between the *Campo Romano* and the temple; for both the armies, divided into

two parts, were besieged by each other ; the *Campo Romano* by the Carthaginian army posted on *Mount Tauro*, and by the detachment under Hannibal : neither of the parties venturing to make an attempt on his enemy, till Hannibal having exhausted his provisions, abandoned the city, and filed off along the *Acragas* to embark his troops.

Advancing on this side, we found what is said to be the tomb of Theron, though its mixed architecture might tempt us to refuse it the honour of acknowledging it for a Grecian work. But history tells us, that the tomb of Theron was at the sea gate, and the only one that escaped the devastations of Himilco. This stands on the very spot ; it is large, and almost entire. How is it possible then that the antiquaries should refuse their assent to testimonies of such great probability ? Be it, however, what it may, this monument is a large pilaster, with a cornice, above which is a square attic, with a window represented on each front, a fluted column let in at each corner, with an attic base, Corinthian capital, and a Doric entablature, with triglyphs ; all this forms a motley assemblage, in a bad style, and of a bad effect, very far from furnishing

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us with an idea of the superb tombs erected by the Agrigentines, not only to their princes, their chief citizens, and every rich individual, but even to their dogs and birds ; the wretched fruits of the idleness and excessive opulence in which they lived. Whatever, in fine, may have been the origin of this monument, when Hannibal had overthrown Selinus, sacked Himera, sacrificed its inhabitants to the manes of Hamilcar, he then turned his arms against Agrigentum, and ordered all the tombs to be destroyed that embellished this quarter of the city ; on approaching that of Theron, the lightning, which rent it at the very instant filled the soldiers with consternation. So great a number of open sepulchres occasioned a pestilential distemper in the army, and was considered as an immediate effect of the vengeance of heaven. The terrified soldiers, imagined they beheld in the dark, wandering ghosts and spectres, and avenging deities. Hannibal himself was carried off by the contagion, and the sole command devolved on Himilco, who to pacify his army, offered sacrifices to the gods, among which, according to the custom of his country, were human

victims. Nay, Rhodomannus tells us, that on this occasion he sacrificed even the priests.

We returned within the precincts of the city, by the sea gate, of which no remains are to be seen; but we clearly discovered the road that passed through it, hewn out of the rock. To the right of this gate, as we entered, stood the temple of Hercules, no part of which is standing but three layers of a single column, a small fragment of the inner wall, and a very inconsiderable part of the foundations of the temple; but all this groups so admirably with the fallen capitals, the scattered trunks of columns, the plants, the inequalities of the ground and the trees, that the whole forms the most beautiful and highly finished landscape imaginable. On measuring the dispersed members of this temple, and comparing our several estimates, it appears to have been one of the handsomest, noblest, and most elegant of all the temples of that kind.

Ascending the street, thirty paces from the gate, we still find on the right, the foundations of an edifice built with equal solidity, and in the same manner with the temples. It had steps likewise, but less lofty, and only

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on the side fronting the street. The form of this building was long and narrow. Antiquarians say it was the custom-house; which is probable enough from the shape and situation of the building, near the sea gate, consequently the gate for commerce.

On the other side of the street, and nearly opposite, stands, or more properly did stand, the gigantic and famous temple of the Olympian Jupiter. Diodorus tells us, it was three hundred and forty feet long, by sixty wide. It never could be finished on account of the Carthaginian war, and fell down in 1401. It seems as if its mass had only served to crush and destroy it; for were it not for two half capitals, some triglyphs, and a fragment of the entablature, these ruins would no longer have any form, or leave the smallest idea of the architecture. We measured a piece of fluting at the part where it terminates in the capital, but never have I beheld any such dimensions. We sought in vain for a first layer, but could find none either standing or misplaced. I was expressing my astonishment that any of the capitals should be preserved, whilst not a single stone was left of the lower parts of the columns, when I learnt that an

engineer, who, a few years since, built the mole of *Girgenti*, asked the king's permission to remove some stones belonging to the ruin of this temple, in order to examine into and ascertain its plan; and having obtained this permission, availed himself of it to take what he thought necessary, and employ them in his building. It being impossible, from the prodigious size of the columns, that they could be of a single block (though they were so far inserted in the wall, as to project only a semi-circumference) the stones composing them were coupled, as we see by the half capital remaining at the southern angle of the eastern part. This capital is found with three layers of the entablature which have fallen in one piece without separating. This fragment, which is of so colossal a size, as to render it difficult, when near, to discriminate or determine its real form, is highly valuable, since we may ascertain from it the true height of the edifice, and form an idea of the proportions of this temple. With respect to the noble bas relief, mentioned by Diodorus, representing the combat of the giants on one side, and the taking of Troy on the other, there are not the smallest remains of it; nor is it impossible that

that none such ever did exist; since, in temples built after this manner, and particularly this, where the columns were let into the wall, no plane surface is left to receive a bas relief but in the pediment, where the Greeks never placed any sculpture. Diodorus, who assigns to this temple a breadth of sixty feet, by one hundred and twenty in height, might have been deceived likewise with respect to the bas relief.

Plans of this temple have been given, which I take to be arbitrary, and in which it is represented as having seventeen columns in depth by six in front, and square pilasters for the interior peristyle. But I think it would be too bold to form any plan from what is remaining of its ruins; nor would it be hazarding less to give an elevation of it, having no measure from the first layer of the columns. It would be impossible to give its dimensions from the measure only of the capitals. Some antiquaries pretend that these columns never have existed, but that the capitals were supported by Giants, after the manner of what architects call *Caryatides*. This opinion they maintain from old traditions, from the name it still bears of *Temple of the Giants*, and from the

the arms of the modern city, taken, they say, from this monument, which the Girogentines have always prided themselves in possessing, and representing three giants bearing a castle, with three turrets, which are no other than the capitals of the temple ill sculptured in barbarous times. A circumstance which may support still more plausibly this hypothesis, is the total absence of every morsel of shaft belonging to these columns, and the greater degree of probability of a complete destruction of these giants, whose sculpture would offer more angles, and expose more surface to the impression of the air and absolute demolition, than huge masses rounded off, and the durable form of inserted columns. It is as difficult, however, to enforce as to ascertain the truth of this opinion, which remains in the mind like the monument itself, of which the eye can only discover traces.

Here we ceased following the walls of the city and the temples; and advancing into the centre of the ancient city, found the fragment of a cornice of a circular form, which has been hollowed to make the basin of a fountain. This fragment, which is of marble, and of a rich, rather than pure, workmanship, may

may very probably have been Roman, and have served as the cornice of a bath, the spring of which rises near this place. The proprietor of the ground has taken away greater part of the stones of this building to make pillars for an arbour, and preserved the water, which he has formed into a basin to refresh his shade.

From hence we proceed directly to the centre of the old city, where there is a convent of reformed Franciscans, called *Santo Nicolo*, built on the ruins of ancient edifices, said to be the *Forum*. In the garden is a small oblong building, with pilasters at the angles, which may probably have been a little private temple, annexed to a great palace, that must have stood in a very advantageous situation, in the middle of the town, and on an eminence commanding it. This spot is said to have been within the precincts of the palace of Phalaris: but the building, from its architecture, must be greatly posterior to the time of Phalaris and all the great temples: it is of the Doric order, with attic bases; and the moulding of the door-case is not in the style of the other structures. It may, very possibly, have been the temple of the household gods
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of some Roman *prætor*, but it is now converted into a chapel ; the modern saint having taken his station opposite the *sanctuary* of the ancient deity, on which account the eastern door has been closed up, and another opened to the west, with an ogive arch of a Gothic form, and a wretched angular stair-case, that disfigures all that side of the building. The projecting pilasters, on the side of entrance, seem to indicate columns and a *peristyle*, which may, in fact, have been destroyed. The good fathers, to whom we had a letter of recommendation, regaled us extremely well, and gave us the best figs I ever eat in my life.

After dinner we went to a field near the convent, where the theatre is supposed to have been situated. It is impossible to distinguish any form of building in support of this opinion; but from the great number of trunks of moderate sized columns, scattered about and employed in the walls of the inclosure, from the foundations of large structures, still discoverable, we cannot doubt but that a considerable edifice once stood on this spot. This was perhaps the theatre in which were acted the tragedies of Empedocles, a native

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of Agrigentum, and inventor of that species of poetry.^a

Returning afterwards to the city, at the place where we had left it, and proceeding to the west-ward, we found ourselves near the walls, for all the temples were built round the city, and each upon an eminence. That of Castor and Pollux, or at least that which is so called, is totally demolished, without leaving sufficient remains to ascertain its plan, without a stone being left in its place, or a single group of ruins susceptible of a drawing. Near this temple was the famous *Piscina*, dug by the Carthaginians, who were taken prisoners at the battle of Himera. It was twenty cubits deep, and seven stadia in circumference.^b Though the internal coating basin of this be intirely destroyed, and time has even furrowed and decayed the rock, out of which it was excavated, we still may very plainly discover its shape and size. The canal that conducted the waters to this reservoir, from a spring, at a small distance, is not wholly destroyed; the stream continues to flow into it, and now waters

^a There were forty-three tragedies of this philosopher.

^b The stadium was one hundred and twenty-five geometrical paces in length, or six hundred and four English feet.

some flourishing gardens, which at present occupy the bottom of the Piscina. The part that served as a dyke to the waters, and let off the superfluity into the river Acragas, is absolutely demolished, which gives this ruin at present rather the appearance of a common ravin, than a work of antiquity.

On the other side of the reservoir, near the angle formed by the wall, as it follows the course of the Acragas, we meet with the ruins of the temple of Vulcan, two columns of which are still standing without their capitals. Its plan is still in a great measure discernible, and some pieces of its interior wall yet remain. If the rustic building which has been added to it spoils the plan, it adds to the picturesque effect of this ruin, and forms it into a very exquisite and highly finished picture. Opposite to this temple was the spring of the Petroleum, which, if ever it really existed, no longer affords any thing but a water with a scum of fat and whitish mud, in which, after closely examining it, I found one of those little globules formed by oil upon the water. On scumming it with my hand, and collecting the most I could of this floating substance, I could discover neither the least taste

taste or smell, but only remarked that it had daubed my hand a little like soap water. This fat spring flows in a little valley, making it a corner of the promised land.

Opposite this angle to the westward was the ground on which the Romans encamped, still called *Il Campo Romano*, and situated between Mount Tauro and the city, on the ancient road of Heraclea. In this part of the western side, the walls were of an irregular form, and followed the windings of the river. The ruins are still distinctly visible. They were alternately the work of art and nature. With this part of the wall, rose a little hillock called *La Meta*, a name supposed to have been retained from the use anciently made of it, for it is asserted that this spot was appropriated to some gymnastick games, such as horse and chariot races. Behind this little mount was a deep ravin enclosed by a great wall, the foundation of which is still remaining. Further on is another angle, where the wall inclines to the eastward, following the ravin, called at present, The vale of Saint Leonardo. At this angle was a great bridge, of which we still see the first layers of the spurs of the arch, or of the pillars that bore the timbers, if of wood,

wood, or beds for the arches to spring from, if of stone. The main city communicated, by means of the bridge, with the quarter called the *Agrigentine* city, likewise enclosed with walls, and itself communicating with the citadel. Following these walls along the ravin *S. Leonardo*, we arrived at one of the ancient gates, where you still go a considerable way along the ancient road, cut out of the tufa, the general nature of the stone of the whole country. It is a marine concretion, mixed with shells of every kind, perfectly preserved in their incrustation. The road was very narrow, being only seven or eight feet wide. Here we left the old city, and evidently perceived we were without the walls, by the number of burial places near the road, cut out of the tufa on a level with the ground, and ranged, four inches from each other, as at Solentum.

The day was far spent, and we deferred to another the examination of the antiquities we had still to visit. Our intention was to take plans of them; and this desire was increased by some circumstances very favourable to our design. Indeed the situation of Agrigentum and all its parts are so strongly marked, every thing

thing about it was on so grand a scale, that it is still easy to retrace distinctly in the very nature of the ground the truth of all that history has delivered down to us concerning it. Each monument was either hewn out of the rock, or raised on an eminence. There are as many mountains as temples ; the ditches in general are excavated vallies, and perpendicular cliffs form the foundation of its walls.

The next day we again set out to complete the circuit of the city, and to observe the course of its rivers, and the situation of the ancient suburbs. We returned to the bottom of the hill of the Franciscans, where the walls, after following the windings of the Acragas, crossed the vale of S. Leonardo, and stretched as far as the Agrigentine mount, to the spot where the *Rupa Athenea* terminated, which they enclosed in their circumvallation. This rock, which where it fronts the north is almost perpendicular, formed on that side an impregnable rampart for the city ; which was the reason it may be presumed, why it was included in its precincts : the part of it which fronted the city, and was of the easiest ascent, was too steep ever to have had houses built on it.

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On the brow of this cliff stood the temple of Jupiter Atabyrius and Minerva, built by Gelias; the temple to which that wealthy citizen of Agrigentum retired with all his treasures, when Himilco entered the deserted city. Here hoped he to find an asylum; but seeing that nothing, however sacred, could escape the Carthaginian fury, he himself set fire to the temple, and was consumed in it with all his riches. There is nothing remaining of this temple but a few fragments of the first steps, and the platform of the *atrium*; but every thing that is preserved is broken so small, and is so irregular, that it is impossible to trace any plan, or to discover whether it was surrounded by columns. Near this spot, we perceived the remains of a wall incrusted in the rock, and some layers of free stone of the same wall. The rock continues perpendicular, and to form a natural fortification: it inclines to the southward, presenting a front to the east. From hence we discovered the course of the *Rucello*, which runs to the eastward of the city, and falls into the *Acragas* to the southward, not far from the temple of *Aesculapius*. From the temple of Jupiter Atabyrius and Minerva, to that of Ceres and Proserpine, the space called the *Rupa Athenea*, is

is so steep, and the rock so bare and hard, that there is every reason to believe that no habitations were ever erected on it. No traces of the hand of man are to be found there, except the quarries, whither the Agrigentines sent the Carthaginians taken prisoners at *Himera*, and from which they made them dig out all those large stones, employed in building the greatest part of their beautiful temples, their lofty and extensive walls, the common sewers, the Piscina, and other publick works. The interval between that battle, and the taking of Agrigentum, was the æra of the prosperity, magnificence, and opulence of the Agrigentines: they carried on, at that period, a great maritime traffic with Africa, where they sold the superfluous productions of their rich and fertile country, then much better cultivated than at present.

There is nothing curious in these quarries but their prodigious size; their cavity is cultivated, and now forms a vast enclosure, like the Piscina. Close to this are two magazines hewn out of the rock, which may very probably have been two reservoirs of water. From hence, a road cut out of the rock, led along the side of the hill to the temple of Ceres and

Proserpine. This road may certainly be presumed to be antique, as it could have no other use since the destruction of that edifice. We discover on it traces of the wheels of carriages; no doubt those employed in conveying materials for building the temple. This way is very narrow, but presents us with nothing remarkable.

The temple of Ceres and Proserpine was built before all the others by Theron, who availed himself of the same opportunity, and employed the same means with Phalaris to attain the tyranny; but he made a very different use of the sovereign power, and was as much beloved by the people, as the other had been an object of their abhorrence. The rock was cut expressly for the site of the temple, and to form for it two large platforms. Its plan was simple, but noble; and if less magnificent than those built afterwards, its structure was at least as perfect. The steps, the walls of the nave, and those projecting before the peristyle, are in good preservation, and now make a part of the modern church of S. Blazi, the bottom of which conceals the ancient gate; the peristyle of which, according to all appearance, was ornamented with a pedi-

a pediment supported by columns, now no longer to be found. We may conclude from two reasons, with some degree of certainty, that this temple was not surrounded by columns: first, because no traces of them are to be discovered; secondly, because the walls of the nave are immediately supported by the steps that are still remaining, which would not be the case had there been a gallery round it. A third reason likewise may be added, which is, that the wall of the temple is too near the rock to allow us to imagine that there ever could have been a gallery in so narrow a space. Its platform extended to the angle of the wall, and according to all appearance, a grand flight of steps descended from the southern part of the temple into the city, and covered what remains of the steep declivity of the mountain. We still very distinctly discover the ridge of the platform on that side, and some remains of the supposed flight of steps, but not in such preservation as absolutely to determine whether the rock was only coated here, or if there really were steps. A little farther on, the wall formed a re-entering angle, obliquely terminated at the bottom by a street, and an opening, hewn out of the rock and

the ruins of a gate, called the gate of *Neapolis*; some layers of the left side of which as you come out of the town are still visible, as are also the large free stones, that served at once for thresholds and the pavement at this gate. We may discover the ancient level, by the gate leading from the main city to the quarter of *Neapolis*, which was a large detached suburb, walled in, and separated from the town by a bridge over the *Rucello*, the last remains of which were shewn me, having been very lately carried off to build a lime-kiln. The bridge was small, and I could not meet with any stone that indicated it to have been arched.

We next bent our course across *Neapolis*, towards the river *Hypsa*, discovering in our way nothing but a few squared stones, some foundations of walls, little buildings, and burying places. This large suburb, which occupied a wide valley, was also surrounded by an enclosure formed by nature; which circumvallation was completed by a feeble wall, the vestiges of which are still visible on the farther side of the valley. This part of the vale, and the rocks opposite to it, are covered with square burial places dug out of the rock. They are found in such numbers, that the hill seems to be

be only one vast heap of sarcophagi, every detached fragment of rock containing two or three.

By this little valley of the dead, parallel to that of *Neapolis*, we approached nearer to the city, over against the gate of *Gela*. These were the quarters of part of the camp of *Himilco*, at the first siege by the Carthaginians, and was separated from the city by the *Rucello*. Between the gate of *Gela* and the temple of *Juno Lucina*, he raised a bastion on which he placed his warlike machines, and battered the walls on this side. In fact, we still perceive that the rock has been here cut in a parallel direction, in two places. This second declivity of the rock no doubt formed the bastion on which the battering engines mentioned in history were placed. Its ruins are now confounded with those of the wall.

From this spot, and retiring toward the eminence that fronts it, we have the finest prospect of the ruins of the ancient city, and are enabled to form a most magnificent idea of *Agrigentum*, as it appeared in all its ancient splendor. From hence we discover the situation of the camp of *Himilco*, the part of the wall he battered, the temple of *Juno Lucina*,

that of Concord, and the tombs before mentioned; on the other side we have a view of the gate of Gela, that of Neapolis, the temple of Ceres and Proserpine, the *Mons Athenea*, and the temple of Jupiter and Minerva; in the middle, we perceive the site of the ancient city; and in the back ground the modern town, built on the spot formerly occupied by the castle of Cocalus and the citadel.

From hence we followed the walls, passing under the temples of Juno, of Concord, and of Hercules, between the *Porta a Mare* and the tomb of Theron, below the temple of the Olympian Jupiter. We then passed a second time before the *Piscina*, at the place where it discharges itself into the *Acragas*, which we now crossed dry-shod, and ascended the *Campo Romano*, a large flat space, on an eminence fortified by nature, which has formed for its defence two sloping walls, by which it is surrounded, and rendered as difficult of attack as a regularly fortified city.

We next went to another eminence, which formed a little quarter connected with the city by the great wall I have spoken of in my first excursion, and from thence to the site of the ancient *Urbs Agrigentina* at *Camico*, which became

became an ill situated suburb of the city of Agrigentum, built by the Greeks of Gela. No part of this old town is visible, but the nearly obliterated traces of some wretched walls. We now ascended the *Camico*, situated close by, the form of one of whose ancient bastions is still preserved by the convent.

Having a great desire to view those famous aqueducts or sewers of Pheax, the first work of that nature known, and which had served as a model for all others of the kind, I went in search of them in the vale of *S. Leonardo*, where I was told there were some apertures; and, in fact, I discovered the mouths of several; into one of which I got them to let me down, but finding the channel obstructed, I passed to another that led me to a conduit, which still conveys the water to the Franciscan convent. I had a man and torch with me, and penetrated into this obscure channel, dug from eight to twenty feet height out of the rock, and from three to four feet wide. After proceeding a hundred paces, I found a second opening; a hundred and twenty paces farther, there is a bend in the channel for twenty paces: then recovering the first direction, I followed it for one hundred and sixteen paces,

and

and found, to the right, another channel, conveying the water likewise from another spring. This channel was only five and twenty paces long, and the water falling from the rock, deposited a mud of the colour of red lead. To the left was another channel, six and thirty paces long, and choaked up by the deposition of this substance. I found the main channel choaked up in the same manner, thirty paces beyond this second communication, and the water filtrating through the mud. This aqueduct, three hundred and eighty paces of which I have examined, has nothing to entitle it to the celebrity of those of Pheax, which apparently are destroyed, or may, perhaps, be those of which we had discovered some vestiges a few days before, magnificently built with free stone, arched with layers projecting over each other, and shut in with a large covering stone, near the Piscina. The ruins of the latter are reduced to so little, and what remains of them is so confused, that it is impossible to form any idea of a fabrick that possessed so high a reputation. With respect to those which I was able to visit and pursue, they are simply formed out of the rock, without any great effort of art, nor

nor have they any coating of stone; other channels have been joined to them, to convey the water of a spring, from the *Rupa Athenea*, to the centre of the city.

I afterwards returned to the mole, and there saw the admirable magazines of the *Caricatorio*, the richest in Sicily, consisting of caverns or cisterns cut out of the rock, in which the corn is preserved without the least injury. This rock is similar, or pretty nearly so, to that described in the account I have given of *Sciaccia*, and perfectly secures the grain, both from humidity and fermentation. The saline and nitrous particles contained in these receptacles preserve the corn, which, when it comes out is really of a better quality than when it was first lodged in them. These magazines belong to the king, and secure the subsistence of the island. Foreign merchants come hither to purchase the surplus, exportation being permitted after the reserve of fifty thousand *salms*, for the seed corn of the district, and the necessary provision for the granaries of the cities. The king is accountable for the corn lodged there, and the proprietors have only a small sum to pay for store-house rent. The grain being extremely dry when removed from the

cisterns

cisterns into the out-houses, the effect of the air alone swells it a twentieth part, which belongs to the sovereign, who is only obliged to be answerable for the measure delivered. This article would afford an immense revenue were it under a better management; were the persons employed never to suffer themselves to be corrupted or imposed upon, nor to receive any corn, except such upon which there can be no loss; and did not pretended deficiencies transfer to the pockets of those who have the conduct of this business the greatest part of the profits.

* His Catholic Majesty has not been more fortunate in his choice of the port of Girgenti, than in that of the harbours of Apulia and Calabria, it being liable to fill up equally by two opposite winds; the south-easterly, driving into it the earth separated from the coast by the force of the waves, and the north-westerly choking it up with the light sand of the shores on that side. After labouring at vast expense to remedy these inconveniencies by two piers, the government has been obliged, as at *Crotona*, to employ galley slaves who work, and must perpetually work, at emptying and cleansing

* Formerly king of Naples and the Sicilies.

the entrance of this port; which must not be abandoned from its importance in the exportation of commodities from all the southern part of Sicily, and the shelter it affords the Neapolitan vessels in the seas most exposed to the Barbary Corsairs, being almost within sight of Africa.

This mole was not the port of the ancient Agrigentum, which was at the mouth of the *Acragas*, and of which not a single trace is left. The sailors pretend that in a profound calm they still distinguish some works at the bottom of the sea, and even a ring of iron or bras. It is very difficult to determine respecting the importance of this ancient port; but as the situation was by no means advantageous, and history makes no mention of an Argentine navy, we may presume that it was only calculated to receive merchant vessels which came there to trade. And there was, in fact, in that quarter a very long suburb, occupying the space from the city to the sea, called the *Emporium*, or Quarter of the Merchants. We find in the country some fragments of walls, which from their situation may be the remains of this suburb.

Judging

Judging of the ancient population of Agrigentum from the extent of its circumference and of its suburbs, we may readily admit the number given us by the celebrated Empedocles, a citizen of that place, who makes the inhabitants amount to eight hundred thousand. At present, reckoning the city, properly so called, which was the ancient castle, the suburb of Camico, and that built by Henry and Constance in the twelfth century, it is reduced to fifteen thousand persons, poor enough for the most part, and of a melancholy wild appearance. I assiduously endeavoured to discover some traces of the beauty that gave such celebrity to the Agrigentine women; but I did not see a single handsome female, nor was able to speak to any one: a circumstance that never occurred to me before in Sicily, even in those places where I had made the shortest stay, yet I was eighteen days at Agrigentum. Nor has the race of horses degenerated less; there is no longer any light cavalry, no longer any studs, nay, properly speaking, there are no longer any Agrigentine horses. The nobility here are very poor, and live in great privacy. The merchants, wholly taken up with their affairs,

see

see no body but at the Exchange; without society and without amusements, every body here is, and appears to be, gloomy and devout. Passing one Friday evening by the great square, I heard them singing a *miserere*, and making a great noise in the church; on stepping into it, I saw two hundred inhabitants of the town, with large whips in their hands, keeping time whilst they laid on their shoulders, and changing hands, when that they struck with was wearied. On this account, since the taking of Agrigentum by the Romans, there would scarcely be any mention of it in history, but for the miracles that have been wrought there, and the saints who have been bishops of the see.

An Agrigentine, named *Gubernatis*, with whom I had become acquainted, and to whom I was indebted for great part of my information respecting that city, conducted me one day to one of the most interesting curiosities of the country, and which has hitherto been neglected by all modern travellers: it is a volcano of a peculiar species, not resembling any other, either in its eruptions, the matter it emits, or the form it assumes.

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This phænomenon is situated between Aragona and Girgenti, six miles from the latter, and four from the former. It was known to Solinus and Fazello, who have both mentioned it. In the time of the latter, the place was called *Maybaruca*; its present name is *Macalubba*. For several ages past it manifested itself so obscurely, and with so little noise, that it was forgotten, and no longer known to any but the possessor of the estate it lies in. But last year, on the 29th of September, 1777, at sunset, a column of thick smoke issued from the centre, which continued rising till six in the morning of the next day, when, by a terrible explosion, it opened itself a mouth, from whence it shot forth into the air, with a tremendous noise, a column of fine potters earth, which rose to the height of above sixty feet, some say twice as high; and spreading into the form of a mushroom, divided and covered part of the orifice from which it had proceeded, whilst the remainder returning back to its centre, occasioned by its fall, a deep and rumbling roar, which was soon followed by a fresh explosion. These throes continued at intervals of every six minutes, and an hour and a half after, it recommenced with more violence

lence than ever, so that in the six hours it lasted, there were four distinct eruptions, which covered with clay a space of two hundred and fifty feet in diameter. The soil was not raised by it above three feet, the matter being so attenuated, as to spread in falling, and flowing like a lava, on the neighbouring eminences, filling up their cavities. The mouth having been filled by this matter, there remained no more appearance than before of a volcano. These eruptions happened eleven months before I visited the place. The proprietor of the ground, who had been an eye-witness of them, was so good as to accompany us, and to communicate to me all the particulars I have related. We examined the place together, but could discover nothing but a cavity scarcely perceptible, covered with a crust, baked and cracked by the heat of the sun. Upwards of sixty apertures, from four to six inches in diameter, manifested the constant exertions of a subterraneous power, by a perpetual ebullition of salt water, mixed with an almost impalpable clay, issuing every instant from these apertures, the matter subsiding and rising, like coffee boiling in a kettle. Round each mouth little craters were formed in shape of cones,

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which the fluidity of the matter prevented from rising to above six or seven inches, and from these craters flowed little fluid lavas, which insinuated themselves into, and were lost in the chinks ; the whole absolutely forming the representation, in miniature, of a volcano, with all its wonderful phænomena.

I was so anxious to examine it, that approaching too near and hastily, my feet broke the crust, and I was ready to sink into the clay. I proceeded with more caution therefore to another aperture, and laid myself on the ground, in order to present a greater surface, and have a nearer view. I applied my ear to the orifice, and heard no internal noise, but a ticking exactly like that produced by small sparks drawn from the conductor of an electrical machine. I found that this noise was occasioned by the explosion of the air bubbles which were continually dilating, and that the noise of the dilatation was stronger than in ordinary water, in proportion to the weight and density of the matter whence they proceeded. These bubbles were sometimes powerful enough to make an explosion four inches above the mouth. The air that evaporated from it had the smell of a brick kiln

newly

newly opened. I applied my tongue to the fluid matter, and found nothing but the taste of sea salt, only a little acrid.

I closed one of the apertures perfectly tight with my hand, and felt the pressure of the air repelling it; the matter now escaped more abundantly from the adjoining mouths, and the air swelled under my hand, so that in lifting it, it was followed by a noise like that of the air pump after a slight stroke of the piston; which evidently proves a general communication of all the apertures. Another proof is, that on our advancing to the centre, the weight of four persons pressing on the crust, made the matter issue more plentifully at once from every crater. I still proceeded to examine some new ones; in some of which I found marks of a bituminous mire, and in all of them a marine salt elaborated by the sun, and spread over the surface of the earth. I introduced my hand into one of the holes, and found the matter tepid like the water of a warm bath. I tried to sound the depth of it with my cane of six feet long, which entered without the least resistance, and gave no signs of a bottom. I then tried a second time the thickness of the crust, and finding it but six

inches at the apertures, began to perceive the danger of making observations on this phænomenon, less dreaded, but more dangerous than any of the kind; for by remaining some time in the same place, I distinctly perceived that the repeated pressure of the foot moistened afresh, and diluted this crust, which if it happened to give way must inevitably precipitate us into a hot mud, where we should meet with unavoidable and dreadful death. We finished our examination of this place therefore with the greatest precaution. I remarked, that this volcano not only threw forth moistened earth, but stone, and a species of baked earth of little consistence, which the air destroys and separates into flakes. I observed likewise different sorts of talc, some in leaf like crystal, and found iron ore and marcasite, with the efflorescence of copper; and on examining the lands adjoining to the volcano, met with the same productions. In some places too there was a crust rendered hard and solid by time, and small mouths producing the same effects, and this at a great distance from those of the eruption of 1777. I picked up a salt there, not to be attenuated by time. Since, notwithstanding the antiquity

tiquity of the other eruptions, whose date is unknown, there is little or no vegetation in all the space in which these apertures are found. This rock stone, and talc, and these minerals, which do not partake of the nature of the clay they are found in, prove that under the bed of this fluid earth, there is a rock, below which lies the principle of this phænomenon. The air bubbles, the odour they exhale, the tepidity of the water, and above all, the spouting and noisy eruption of last year, leave no room to doubt of the cause being volcanic.

If I might be allowed to hazard any conjecture of my own, concerning the cause of a phænomenon with which we are so little acquainted, I should say that the subterranean fire that reigns throughout this part of the island, from Sciacca hither, meets in this place with some salt springs, which subtilizing a light earth, leaves here, more readily than elsewhere, a passage for the air produced by this fire ; that this passage of the air, continually lifting, mingling, and attenuating more and more this earth, by its continual heat, it becomes at length so elaborated and light, as to give way to the power that raises it, and

R 3 that

that immediately after the volcanic evaporation, this humid matter, falling back on itself, resumes in its turn the power it had lost on the volcano ; and that here, in short, as at the stoves of Sciacca, and in the country round Palma, where a great deal of sulphur is fabricated, we can discover only the principles of a volcano, the materials of which apparently are neither sufficiently abundant, or complete, nor renewed often enough, to produce the great effects of Vesuvius and Ætna.

We departed from *Girgenti* the 1st of September in the morning, passing through the walls of the ancient city at the gate of *Gela*. We left the suburb of *Neapolis* on the left, and arrived on the banks of the river *Hyssa*, where the Carthaginians were defeated by the succours sent by *Gela* to the *Agrigentines*, at the time of the first siege by *Himilco* ; a battle which the inhabitants may really have viewed from their walls, as history informs us they did, and not as some pretend on the banks of the *Himera*, which is six and twenty miles distant, and could never be discovered from *Agrigentum*, notwithstanding its elevated situation. Several geographers have placed *Agrigentum* on that river, but the error is so glaring, and so generally

generally exploded, that it is no longer worth while to controvert it. We travelled for twelve miles in an immense valley, and arrived at the sulphur works of *Palma*, which lay on the right of our road. The sulphur is extracted by the simplest process. It merely consists in taking stones out of the mountain, which when broken, and piled up on a furnace, are exposed to the fire, in which the sulphureous particles liquefy, and are received in a sort of cauldrons, which form the bottom of the furnace, from whence the matter is drawn off by a cock into boxes, where it is left to cool. It appears that this sulphur must have previously suffered a degree of heat and fusion; for great lumps of it are found like large pebbles, and of the same form, unmixed with any extraneous matter; these lumps are in a very refined state, and almost transparent. Three miles from this place, some pieces are found also in a state of crystallization, and of a colour as brilliant as the oriental topaz. The stones taken out from the furnace, after the extraction of the sulphur, are light and porous; some of them too, exhibit a principle of white crystallization, and the rock around the whole mine is of a greyish hue mixed with a cinereous

R 4 clay.

clay. Two miles from hence the country becomes fertile, and is covered with fruit trees, principally with almonds, a considerable article of commerce with the Dutch, who come to purchase this fruit at *Palma*, a large town at two miles distance. The houses of that place are built of stone, and the mortar is so white, as to make them appear new, and to give such as are in ruins the air of being unfinished. We stayed here no longer than the time necessary for dinner. *Palma* contains about eight thousand inhabitants,

A L I C A T A.

The country continues to abound in the same productions, that is to say, in vineyards, corn, and fruit trees, and we no sooner left the vale of *Palma*, than we came in view of the vast plain bathed by the river *Himera*, now called the *Salso*, and beyond it the celebrated fields of *Gela*. At the end of a chain of hills, on the sea-shore, on this side the river, stands *Licata* or *Alicata*, said to be the ancient city of *Gela*; a claim disputed with it by *Terra-Nuova*, though the latter does not appear to possess a better founded title. *Virgil*,

gil, a poet who may be always cited as an accurate geographer in all disputes of this nature, says :

Apparet Camerina procul, campique Gelo,
Immanisque Gela, fluvii cognomine dicta.

ÆNEID. Lib. III.

which lines seem to prove that city not to have been on the sea shore, since Æneas discovered its fields only at a great distance. Diodorus says that the *Agrigentines*, after passing the river, encamped in the Gelean fields ; that after defeating the troops of Gela, they likewise passed the river in their flight, and that on the capture of the town, the inhabitants came to reside at *Phintia*, which proves Gela to have been on the left of the river.

This city of Phintia was built by Phintia, Tyrant of Agrigentum, who being seated on the throne, and protected by the Carthaginians, founded and bestowed on it his name. History also informs us that Himilco, passing the river Himera, encamped before Gela. But if that general coming from Agrigentum passed the river Himera, to encamp before Gela, this city must necessarily have stood on the left of the river, and not on the right, the side on which Alicata stands. History says likewise, that

that Dionysius, who marched at the head of the Syracusans to succour Gela, formed his camp at the same time between the city and the sea, in order to keep near his fleet, which lay at the mouth of the river Gela. Now there certainly is not room for a camp between what is here supposed to be the situation of the ancient Gela and the sea, since it is nothing but a very steep rock towards the coast, and near this there is no river but the Himera, nor even the smallest rivulet to which the appellation of the river Gelas could be applied. Farther, history, after giving us to understand that Dionysius secretly befriended the Carthaginians, relates, that leaving Gela at midnight, he arrived in the morning at *Camerina*, and that having persuaded the inhabitants to follow him, and perceiving the murmurs of his troops, and the defection of his cavalry, he fled with his guard full speed to *Syracuse*, where he arrived at midnight. If Gela had stood where Alicata now stands, it would not have been possible for him to have arrived in the morning at Camarina, and still less for him and his guards in four and twenty hours to have reached Syracuse, which by the shortest road is ninety miles from Licata. The opinion therefore which

which places the ancient Gela at Alicata, seems to me to have no other foundation than the claim of the inhabitants, whose pretensions rest only on the authority of a small Greek inscription, which they shew on a piece of marble, of three feet and a half by ten inches, inserted in the wall of their cathedral, and on the circumstance of the vast plains bathed by the Himera, at this day the Salso. By way of confirmation, they have taken for their arms the ancient impress of the coin of Gela, which is the body of an ox, with a human head. They have sculptured likewise at their gate two busts, one of Antiphemus the Rhodian, and the other of Eutimes of Crete, the founders of Gela. It is possible nevertheless, that these plains may really have been the *Campi Geloi*, or territory of Gela, though this was not the situation of the city, and that this little inscription, which is of extremely easy conveyance, may have been brought hither with other relics after the destruction of Gela.

We examined the country round *Alicata*, and observed, opposite the town, some rocks on a level with the water, having all the appearance of the pier of a harbour, and which it is natural to suppose the inhabitants made use

use of to form the port of Phintias, adding some artificial improvements to these natural advantages. The harbour in this case would be shut in, and defended by a huge rock, which still serves as a fortrefs, and, as it is said, once stood detached (a circumstance by no means impossible) and permitted vessels to enter by a passage where the castle now is, that unites the rock to the main land, blocking up the entrance of the harbour, which could be of no use to modern built vessels.

On the hill that commands the modern town, near the convent of the capuchins, we found some inconsiderable fragments of antient edifices. Among others, a cistern made of the cement, used so often by the Romans, of broken bricks mixed with lime. We found likewise some fragments of a kind of Mosaic composed of little cubes of marble, regularly distributed in this cement, as also some pieces of Greek vases. Two miles farther on, following the chain of the mountain, we were shewn, on a rock, some remains of three rows of steps, so much defaced, as to have more the air of being formed by nature than by art. These, we were told, were the ruins of a temple of Gela, though

though there remained not a single square stone to testify in favour of that opinion. They shewed us too, with great pomp, some little grottoes eight or ten feet square, formed by shepherds as a shelter from the weather; an hermitage with paintings suitable, and a large square cavity, cut out of the rock, exhibited as the grand convincing testimonial, but which seemed to me nothing more than the site of a watch tower for giving signals, a building the more necessary in this place, as the plain it overlooks is so low, and environed with mountains, as, to have no other means of being apprized of what is passing at sea. For, from this point, the plain and the bed of the river *Salso* appear much below the level of the coast, and are in fact so little above that of the sea, that in the heavy gales of winter, it enters the river, and renders the water salt a great way up the country. In summer, it choaks up the mouth of the river with sand, stops its course, and forces it to escape only by an imperceptible filtration, which produces a bad air, of the inconveniences of which the inhabitants are far from being insensible, but they are prevented by the vicinity of the sea,

from

from experiencing all the bad effects it must otherwise produce.

The population of *Alicata* consists of ten thousand persons, who enjoy all the comforts arising from an excellent country, and grain and fruits of the best quality. Its trade is in corn, and the supplying *Malta* with provisions: *Alicata* being the magazine, and port, for the exportation of all the necessaries of life, furnished to that neighbouring island by Sicily. It supplies *Malta* particularly with pastry, which is whiter and better here than elsewhere. The figs, and the birds called *Becafigos*, or White Ears, are exquisite here. The latter are taken in such great quantities, that they make an oil from their fat, which they preserve in bottles, and keep it the whole year. It is made use of as butter for ragouts, and is superior to it. The inhabitants of *Alicata* carry the chief part of their fruit to *Malta*, for which they bring back a great deal of money; and it may be observed, that if Sicily be of singular utility to the Maltese, their money is likewise of the utmost importance to the commerce of this part of Sicily.

as good as a fellow that comes to land, and
when he is not in town, and when he does not
have a return pass, he is to land for heavy

T O U R

TO

M A L T A.

THREE being no *Esperonaro* then at *Alicata*, we were detained three days, till we would procure one from *Terra Nuova*. We did not set sail therefore before the 4th of September, as night came on. Our little vessel had six men, and cost us seven ounces; about four pounds Sterling. We were in all six passengers, and so crowded, that there was no place to lie down in; for these vessels are so small, that did we not know that they are constantly employed, no person would risk himself in them on the open sea.

sea. We had a pretty fresh westerly breeze, which carried us nine knots in the first hour. When we set sail I felt myself animated with all the enthusiasm inspired by the thought of braving the ocean; but these high spirits only lasted half an hour, and I soon sunk into that state of suffering, disquietude, and despondency I had before so often experienced. We were all sick as soon as the wind dropt, and there was only just enough to carry us as fast as we could have rowed.

Proceeding along the coast, we arrived, at two in the morning, at *Terra Nuova*, and from thence sailed down the mid-channel, steering straight for *Gozo*. The wind dying away, we had the breeze of the current, which always blows from east to west, and gave us a retrograde motion, that every instant had a very disagreeable effect on my weak stomach. On the 5th at noon, the westerly wind freshened for some hours, carried us out of sight of Sicily, and kept us for an hour or two in the open sea; for we soon discovered the isle of *Gozo*, the loftiest of the three islands, composing the sovereignty of the Grand Master of Malta. It is discovered at thirty miles distance, and Sicily disappears

disappears at thirty-five, which leaves fifteen miles open sea, out of the eighty, the breadth of the channel between Terra Nuova and Malta.

We bore down on Gozo during the remainder of the day, but it so happened, that instead of coming to an anchor at that island, we drove to the eastward, and made *la Cumino*, a little island, no better than a barren rock, between Gozo and Malta. This isle of Cumino is so named from the cummin it produces, and which grows, if I may so say, on the stone.

The impossibility of entering Malta in the night, and my impatience to land in order to procure some relief and give a few moments respite to my stomach, for I had even vomited blood during the whole day, rendered this ruggedest of all shores, in my eyes, a most delightful grove. We spread our cloaks upon the ground, and whilst our boatmen were supping and making themselves merry, endeavoured to take some repose. Scarcely had we remained two hours in this situation, before I felt myself awakened by a man, who accosted me in a language to which I was an utter stranger; by his earnestness, however, I

conceived that he was giving me some salutary advice. I questioned him in Italian, which he did not understand ; but at length, by dint of signs, made me comprehend that we must not remain there, unless we wished to perform quarantine. I led him to the boat, where there was a Maltese who understood a little Arabic, the language he was speaking ; and learnt from him that the isle of Gozo was in quarantine, a slave from the Levant having escaped, and concealed himself in the island, and though we had not landed there, should we be discovered by any of the barks of the police, we should be obliged to perform quarantine on our arrival at Malta. The idea of this made us all shudder ; I dreaded the quarantine still more than the sea, and presently slipped a crown into the hand of our adviser.

We returned on board in the dead of night, with all possible haste, and doubling the *Cuminotto*, a small desert rock, sailed along the low coast of Malta. There being no wind, we took to our oars, following all the windings of the shore, and passing under the different towers and forts which defend the bays and anchoring grounds of that part of

the island, which alone is accessible; all the other side being sufficiently guarded by nature. At break of day, we arrived at the point of *Dragut*, so called from the viceroy of Algiers, who landed there at the siege of Malta, under the reign of Soliman, and when La Valette was grand master.

We passed before the harbour of *Marfa Muscat*, where we found the French ship of war the *Cato*, which had carried M. de Saint Priest to Constantinople, and was performing complete quarantine, the most violent plague raging in, and depopulating, all the coasts of the Levant. We next arrived under the famous fort *Saint Elmo*, the principal fortification of Malta, which cost the Turks so many men, and which they were unable to carry till the very last knight who defended it was slain. It is now more formidable than ever, and nothing can be more awful than its bastions, built on a rock projecting into the sea, with tremendous batteries, covering the entrance of both the harbours.

M A L T A.

We were stopped at the first guard-house, till the officer on guard relieved us. We now got sight of that superb prospect, the inside of the harbour, its innumerable forts, and the two towns built in an amphitheatre; a prospect, resembling that of no other city in the world, and second perhaps in magnificence to none. There is not a single beautiful edifice; but being all remarkably well built, and appearing as if founded on vast and noble bastions, nothing can be more striking than their external aspect. The inner part of the New Town on the right, built by *La Valette*, after the famous siege by the Turks, bears the name of its founder. Beautiful and spacious flights of stone steps conduct to large streets, perfectly straight, and exceedingly well paved. The houses are built of free stone, of so peculiar a beauty, as to appear always new, and the earth and dust are so white, that instead of soiling the walls, they seem perfectly to renew their colour. This external and internal cleanliness of Malta, contrasted with what is seen in Sicily, is so striking, as to make us imagine ourselves two thousand leagues from it; and indeed, there never were perhaps two countries,

countries, so contiguous to each other, which, in every physical and moral point of view, had so little relation and resemblance as these.

No spot on earth can be more fortunate and more fertile than Sicily ; none can be more ungrateful, more barren, or more wretchedly situated than the Isle of Malta, if what the indefatigable Maltese attempt to cultivate, deserves the name of earth. In Sicily crops of every kind are produced, and though they rapidly succeed, and as I may say press upon, each other, the peasant there is poor, languid, and disgustingly dirty : at Malta the farmer can only force from the soil a little corn and cotton ; yet poverty there is so active, so industrious and so neat, that it has the air only of abstinence. Large breeches, a shirt of blue linen, a broad sash, and the arms and feet left naked, form the whole description of the light dress and ornaments of the Maltese. Their features and complexion are as Arabian as their language ; interested and artful in all their bargains, they are scrupulously faithful in fulfilling every contract, which renders all commercial intercourse with them safe and easy. The women are exempted from every kind of labour, which is entirely performed by the men, even to the most trivial

household work. In imitation of the Levantine and Eastern customs, it seems as if they limited the utility of the sex to the sole department of pleasure. Though under a burning sky, they possess the fair skin of the inhabitants of the north, with the impassioned expression of the orientals: their beauty is neither Grecian nor majestic, but is not on that account the less seducing. With fine complexions, which they carefully preserve, they have almost all of them large eyes, in which love seems to lie in ambush beneath their long eye-lids, that give them a pleasing air of langour, not a little resembling modesty. Those of the country are said to be faithful to their husbands: but the women of the city know no more how to resist the gold of the Baillis, than the amorous sighs of the youthful knights; and we accordingly find at Malta the utmost licentiousness of celibacy. Their dresses display more of coquetry than magnificence. Elegance and neatness constitute their luxury. They have the custom of shaving themselves like the men; but then it is with so much art, that you must come very close to them, to discover the voluptuous effect

effect of this practice. This operation they perform very dexterously with broken glas.

There are two inns at Malta, the *Falcon* and the *Three Kings*. We put up at the latter, where we were exceedingly well treated and lodged for three livres (half-a-crown) a day. I was recommended to the French resident, who is always one of the Knights. He presented me to the Grand Master, formerly Prior of the Convent, then Chief of the Order, and now Sovereign; a situation the most eminent a private individual can attain, except the Papacy. He is accordingly distinguished by the title of Your Eminence. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is very possible that he may not be the happiest of men. Surrounded by ambitious pretenders, his court, like that of the most powerful monarchs, is a prey to intrigue, and his states are so limited, that he can never remove to any great distance from his tomb, towards which he well knows that a thousand of the brotherhood regret that his approaches are so slow. Notwithstanding their submission, they seem to reproach him with every moment he steals from their ambition, by continuing too long to occupy a place, they all aspire to in their turns. Nor do political af-

fairs render him more happy, when retired within his palace: under ties to all the sovereigns of Europe, who grant unmeaning honours to his flag, and without the necessary forces boldly to act the part of a neutral power, he finds himself continually reduced to make apologies, and compelled to give satisfaction to every prince, or state, who think themselves entitled to demand it. In his own country, surrounded with fortifications, with mortars, and with cannon, this unfortunate sovereign is perpetually on the defensive against intestine cabals, conspiracies, and revolts. The last year of the reign of Ximenes affords an example of this, in the insurrection of the priests who had projected nothing less than the assassination of the Grand Master, and all the Knights in the church itself. This project failing in its execution, they had the audacity to take possession of two forts, and fired the cannon, which they happily knew neither how to charge or point, against the town. This ridiculous attempt has furnished the reigning Grand Master with a pretext to keep a regiment in his pay, besides his ordinary guard, and thus to make advances toward that independent sovereignty to which all princes, all chiefs,

chiefs, in short, all men invested with command, constantly aspire.

The laws of every state are all good, and wise, and adapted to the country for which they have been made ; but to know a government, we must not content ourselves with inquiring concerning its code, or informing ourselves of its laws, but of the manner in which it is possible to infringe them. The Grand Master is only the first amongst his equals. In council he has but one voice more than the rest of the members, and all affairs should be brought before the council. The Grand Master of Malta, therefore, is only what a Consul was at Rome, an Archon at Athens, and what a Landman now is in Switzerland. But he has the direction of political measures which require secrecy, he must therefore have a private council in which he is absolute ; and in this council all affairs of importance are transacted. In the grand council, every question to be discussed must be proposed by the Grand Master, so that it depends on him to let it remain unnoticed, if he does not wish to see it finally determined, or if he perceives the other members not disposed to decide conformably to his inclination. If it be

be of moment, and connected with the constitution, or he be desirous of seeing it disposed of agreeable to the regular forms, he calculates the number of voices he can depend on; and as he is the distributor of all the favours of the order, and can create whatever places he may think necessary, he can make as many honorary Baillis, as he stands in need of suffrages, to defeat the opposite party. Thus has he the power of proposing what he pleases, and of carrying every point, without being personally responsible for any measure. The power of the Grand Master of Malta therefore is more than monarchical.

We had arrived on the eve of the anniversary of the raising the siege of 1565, which is always celebrated as a publick festival. It commences with a mortuary service at the church of St. John, for the gallant knights who lost their lives at the siege, and whose names are commemorated with an eulogium on the her~~o~~ick deeds by which they have been immortalized. The next day all the troops being under arms, the Grand Master is saluted when the gospel is read, by the grand standard of the order, which is displayed by his seat under a canopy; and a

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page brings him the sword and poniard sent by Philip II. on the occasion, to the Grand Master, La Valette. The whole concludes with a long procession; during which, salvoes of cannon are fired from the batteries of all the forts.

In the dome of this church, which is of very indifferent architecture, the history of St. John is painted by Matthias of Calabria. To know this painter, and allow him all the admiration that he merits, it is necessary to see this noble performance. Great in his composition and execution, his manner is as free as that of Paul Veronese, whom he resembles in his style of design and colouring. It were to be wished that he had succeeded as well in imitating that painter, in the grandeur and elegance of his figures, which are sometimes a little too harsh and forced. But this defect is less to be objected to him in this than others of his works; for nothing can be bolder, or executed in a grander style than the gigantick figures of knights and martyrs, with which he has decorated this dome. It is greatly to be wished that they may be engraved, before time, or the necessity of repairing the church, shall have destroyed these truly

truly masterly pieces, as well as for the reputation of the painter, who has not always been equally happy in his easel pictures.

In the chapel of St. John, in the same church, is a large picture by Michael Angelo di Caravaggio, representing the beheading of St. John; a composition at once simple and terrible.

This picture, it is said, procured him the cross of a knight, which he had come to solicit, in order to take vengeance of a Roman knight who had refused his challenge. There is also a treasury, in which we saw a great deal of gold and silver. We were conducted to the fortifications, *Fort St. Elmo*, and *Fort Manoel*, the latest and completest work, situated on a peninsula, and protecting the harbour of *Marfa-Muscat*. From hence we went out of the new city, across fortifications that seem impregnable, but covered, nevertheless, by others not less considerable, called *La Florianne*. These great works have been facilitated, indeed, by the nature of the situation, in which it is only necessary to cut a soft rock, in order to form ditches ready lined, and bastions that require no other repair, but a little cement, applied to the natural crevices of the

the stone. When we afterwards traversed the grand harbour, and, entering that of the English, viewed the circumvallation called *la Cotonere*, from the name of the Grand Master who constructed it, we could not help observing a rage for fortifying, rather than a judicious foresight, in such a multiplicity of works; since it would be impossible for the Order to maintain a sufficient number of soldiers to man them; and these works, if left undefended, would soon become, in case of an attack, so many entrenchments for the enemy. This extravagance has also given birth to another; I mean the great number of cannon. This place alone has fifteen hundred; of which five hundred are of brass, yet they continue to cast or purchase new ones every day.

We visited *Fort St. Michael*, at the point of the island, a very well built quarter, intersected by two large and handsome streets, which, by other smaller ones that cross them, communicate with the two harbours, one of which is the harbour of the gallies, and the other the English harbour. At the bottom of the former stands the large town, where the knights formerly resided, before they removed to the city of La Valette. This town is as handsomely

handsomely built, and not less cleanly than the other. In the harbour, at the bottom of which it stands, lie the ships and gallies of the order. When I saw it, there were three large ships of war, and a frigate; the four gallies being at sea. This private basin, which communicates with the great port, is defended by the castle of *St. Angelo*, and the batteries on the point of the island, which would still secure the navy of the order, even should an enemy's fleet succeed in forcing, or taking the two forts, of *St. Elmo* and *Ricasoly*, which defend the entrance of the main harbour.

We went out of the town, without finding *the country*: for what is so called, is as much covered with buildings as the city, and seems as strongly fortified by large continued walls, which hold up, or incase the little earth there is naturally on the island, and what is brought, or fabricated there; for by breaking small the soft rock, and mixing it with the earth they have, filling the bottom with the best of it, and watering the whole, the indefatigable Maltese at length compose a soil, well suited at least to the cultivation of cotton, the most plentiful and most general produce of the island. They have abandoned almost

every

every other species of culture for this, which is so advantageous both in point of quantity, and quality, as to supply the want of every other production, and to pay for the corn imported from the foreign countries to support them during nine months of the year, the island itself scarcely producing subsistence for three. They therefore make incredible efforts to increase their cotton, and are so convinced of the advantages they derive from it, that a peasant whom I found watering the plant, said to me, *We must still cultivate it, were we even reduced to use oil instead of water.*

This cotton is sown in the month of March. They first dig a little hole of a few inches, filling it with water, and, as soon as the earth is well soaked, put in the seed, cover it up, and water it no more, until it begins to shoot, and make its appearance above ground. The plant grows to the height of ten to fifteen inches, flowers in August, and yields the cotton in September. When at maturity, the pod, which is its fruit, bursts of itself, opens a little, and shews the cotton contained in cells, enveloping the grain. Three sorts of it are cultivated; the Indian cotton, which is the finest, and shoots five years without renewing

newing the plants ; the cotton of the country, which does not grow so tall, and must be sown every two years ; and the yellow cotton, of which nankeen is made. The cotton is worked up in the island, which has been famous many ages for its weaving, since Cicero, who, fortunately for our knowledge of this country and of Sicily, was appointed to plead against Verres, accuses that governor of having procured a robe of cotton wrought at Malta, of an exorbitant price, to make a present of to some female.

I went to see *St. Anthony*, a country-house belonging to the Grand Master, where he has just laid out a parterre, or flower-garden, in the French taste; but the pleasure it affords is but an indifferent recompense for the loss of a wood of ancient orange-trees that formerly shaded that spot.

From hence we proceeded to the *Bosquet*, another of his *casals*, or country-houses. There is nothing interesting in this villa ; but the prospect of a wooded and watered valley gives repose to the eye fatigued with the burning dryness of the surrounding landscape. The falconry, at the bottom of the valley, is a delicious place, and the only wild

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and rural retreat, which can give the Maltese any idea of the groves of other countries.

Large and ancient orange trees are watered by streams flowing from abundant springs, which diffuse a freshness, the more delicious, as it is rarer and more desirable here than elsewhere. The park is stocked with Corsican stags, and deer from Iceland ; the menagerie, which, from the climate of the island, might be capable of preserving the animals of every country, contains nothing curious but gazels, the handsomest, swiftest, and most delicate of all quadrupeds. Their eyes serve for the gallant comparisons of oriental lovers, in extolling the beauty of their mistresses. Their motions are inconceivably quick, and their legs so slender, that the beholder is every moment fearful of seeing them break.

From hence we came to the old city, called *La Cité notable*, the most ancient town of the island, and the capital^a before the arrival of the knights in 1530 : it is still the residence of the bishop. It was here St. Paul preached the gospel, and remained three months after his shipwreck. They shewed us the grotto

^a Called *Melita* by the ancients.

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where *he said mass*; but there is nothing extraordinary or romantic in its appearance. Our next visit was to the catacombs, the smallest and best preserved of any I had seen: being hewn out of a white, sound stone, perfectly dry, they seem as if they had been formed but yesterday. There can be little doubt that the purposes for which they were designed were to inter the dead, to serve as a place of concealment, and to celebrate the mysteries of Christianity. If we consider the smallness of the galleries, in which one person only can pass at a time; their regular arrangement; their roof, which is arched, though cut out of the rock; the chambers which are met with at different intervals; the plaster that still remains on many of them; the ornament of two fluted pillars in the largest apartment, and which seems to have been the principal; the contrivance of the little niches to receive the lamps that enlightened these subterraneous abodes; the regularity of the tombs, the greatest part of which were placed under square roofs, and had a sort of decoration representing a sarcophagus covered in the form of a pediment; we shall certainly find sufficient reason to conclude, that these

these catacombs are not, like others, mere excavations formed by chance, to get out stones, since the smallest of the galleries would have rendered that, if not impossible, at least very difficult; nor would the regular distribution which is seen, have been regarded, had nothing more been intended.

I should think it therefore more natural to assign to these the use attributed to other catacombs; that is to say, to conclude that they were caverns which served for hiding-places, a circumstance more probable here than elsewhere; for at the time of the first inroads of the Saracens on this island, they were contented with plundering, considering it only as a resting-place in their way to Sicily, in which they could not long remain from the sterile nature of the country. The inhabitants, feeble in themselves, or few in number, took refuge in these retreats, until the enemy had reembarked, or, by means of these subterraneous entrenchments, were perhaps able to defend themselves, and harass the invader by unknown openings that penetrated far into the country. It is possible therefore, that these caverns, hewn out at first to receive the remains of the dead, eventually served to preserve

serve the property of the living, who shut themselves up in them with their valuable effects, abandoning their rocks, and their unpeopled city to the enemy, till they should be expelled by hunger. This I take to be the most probable account we can devise respecting these works; on the subject of which there remains neither any date, vestiges of inscriptions, paintings, sculpture, nor, in fine, any historical information whatever. They are certainly too vast to have been constructed for the sole purpose of sepulture, and the passages are too narrow for them to have been of use as quarries.

The tombs are not so numerous here as in other catacombs. The large ones I have described, served as a burial place for two bodies; and we still see the place of two heads cut in stone. In the largest hall we found two round stones of the form of an oil mill, of which we could not conceive the use.

From the catacombs we entered the city, fortified with large ditches and handsome walls, and equally well built with *La Valette*, but exhibiting a frightful solitude and depopulation; the only noise the traveller hears in the streets proceeds from himself. I thought I was entering

tering a cloister after every person had retired to rest. We saw over the principal gate a mutilated statue of Juno, inserted in the wall, the Gothic workmanship of which destroys the effect of the antique drapery of this figure, which wants both the head and hands. We saw likewise, in the street, against the walls of the senatorial palace, two marble fragments of a cornice and entablature, loaded with ornaments, but with little taste, and of indifferent execution, which we imagined to be Roman.

From all the specimens of sculpture and medals found in the island, we may conclude that the arts never were carried there to any great degree of perfection. This town was first inhabited by the Phœnicians, the earliest navigators in the world. They remained long in possession of it, and some of their copper coins are still found, representing a female head, with the deities Orus, Isis, and Osiris on the reverse. The Greeks next became masters of it, without forming any other settlements than what were necessary for their commerce. After them came the Carthaginians, some of whose coins are likewise preserved, with Punic inscriptions. These were succeeded by

the Romans, who struck money with Greek inscriptions on one side, and Latin on the other. In the partition of the empire it fell to the emperor of the east. It was taken by the Saracens, and recovered by the Normans, and afterwards passed successively to the emperors of Germany, the kings of Sicily, and all the different houses that have filled that throne. Finally, notwithstanding the excellence of its harbour, and its advantageous situation for the commerce of the Mediterranean, of which it occupies the centre, Charles V. bestowed it on the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, the only power capable of converting it into a permanent settlement. Unproductive in itself, the garrison and fortifications necessary for its defence were too burthensome to its successive sovereigns. It became the emporium, and place of refreshment, for all European vessels trading in the Mediterranean, and fell successively under the power of every invader. It required therefore a sovereignty, which from its nature could only remain neuter, too feeble to give umbrage to any other power, and derives all subsistence from without. It was necessary likewise, that its possessors, wealthy in other countries,

countries, should bring with them in specie what the island is obliged to expend in purchasing articles of subsistence; that they should be at once monks, soldiers, and bachelors, composing one and the same family; the œconomy of whose individual members should revert by inheritance to the accumulated mass which pays the labour, and provides for the subsistence of the native inhabitants, who have increased since the establishment of the order to the present day, from ten to fifty thousand, including those of Gozzo and Cumino.

The nation has retained the mercantile and speculative spirit of its Phœnician origin, and the same indifference for literature and the fine arts. The Grand Master has lately laid the foundation of a museum, which will become the property of the order, and will be annexed to what they already possess in the treasury, where there are some pictures and marble bas reliefs discovered in the country, which appear to be portraits. There are Roman works, the execution of which corroborates what I have already advanced respecting the state of the arts in Malta. Among these there is a head of Cicero's daughter, a work greatly below mediocrity, and the others seem to

be by the same hand. There is also a publick library, under the direction of the Abbé Agio, a young Maltese, who owes his acquirements solely to an innate taste for the sciences. This very amiable young man, who has rendered very essential services to this institution by his talents and activity, will one day perhaps become the father of Maltese literature.

This library, is already considerable, and is daily augmenting by the inheritance of the private collections of the professed knights, and by the sale of the duplicates, unfortunately too often repeated, and of the more ordinary books, which do not produce much money. It is the same with the collection of coins and medals, which, however, begins to be rich in Greek ones. In the same library are two fragments of marble candlesticks, with Phœnician inscriptions on the pedestals, in perfect preservation. The Abbé Barthelemy assures us that he has translated them ; they are as follow :

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 946911+31+2931+9903990
 0447931+9905047931+5954
 47991449

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TRANSLATION.

“ Abdaffar and Afferemar, sons of Affermor, son of Abdaffar, have made this vow to our lord Melerat, tutelar divinity of Tyre: may he bless them after having led them astray.”*

I know not why we find on the same pedestals this second Greek inscription.

ΔΙΟΝΣΤΙΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΑΡΑΠΙΩΝ ΟΙ
ΣΑΡΑΠΙΩΝΟΣ ΤΥΡΙΟΙ ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙ
ΑΡΧΗΤΕΤΕΙ.

“ Dionysius and Serapion, of the city of Tyre, sons of Serapion, to Hercules, surnamed Archegetes.”

These two monuments, though little interesting in themselves, are certainly curious for their antiquity. They were found in the *Villa-Abela*, at the bottom of the Grand Harbour, where there is said to have been a temple of Hercules, of which nothing is now remaining. A marble statue of that hero has likewise been found; it is two feet high, and in great estimation at Malta, but it by no means

* See Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Lettres and Inscriptions. Tome 30, page 413.

possesses the beauties it might have received from the Grecian chisel: it is faulty both in the proportions and the effect of the whole. The head seemed to me to be modern, though they pretend that it was only broken off a few years since by a slave, who sold it as a head of St. John. The feet have been perhaps still more injuriously treated by the sculptor who has retouched them. It would be difficult to assign any particular period for this statue; but its mediocrity renders it unnecessary to make any researches into the subject.

In this museum we still find a great number of vases, lamps, and lachrymatories; but they have nothing of the elegance of the Grecian vases, and either are Phœnician, or of the lower ages; for they resemble those I have seen found at Solentum, and in the tombs of the lower periods, when this kind of lamps and lachrymatories was still in use. There is also a beautiful glass vase, found at Malta, eighteen inches high, and exactly of the same kind with those of Pompeii, which may lead us to ascribe it to the Romans. The traveller should also visit the cabinet of M. Barbaro in this city, who has arranged with great taste, a fine collection of specimens of

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all the natural productions of the island, and a considerable number of Roman coins, highly valuable for their excellent preservation, which he shews to strangers with the utmost affability and politeness.

The isle of Gozzo has been imagined by many of our modern antiquaries to have been the island of Calypso; but this opinion has now been out of fashion for some years, and though there is nothing at Malta which in the least resembles the description of that island by Homer and Fenelon, they have now transferred to that island the residence of the amorous nymph, and placed her palace at the bottom of the harbour of *la Melleha*. We traversed the whole island to discover this bay or harbour, in the recess of which, and half way up the hill, there is in fact a fountain of four inches breadth of water, conveyed from off the rock by an aqueduct of four hundred feet in length. Into this aqueduct I entered, to examine if I could discover any buildings, but found nothing but the rock carelessly excavated, without any kind of ornament. Forty feet from the mouth of it, the water was conveyed from another spring, at the distance of one hundred feet, into the same conduit,

duit, by another branch of an aqueduct similar to the former. This profusion of water is distributed through a large kitchen garden, which descends in form of a terrace to the sea, rendering it the most fertile and luxuriant garden in the island.

Ascending a flight of steps in the steep rock that commands this garden, and the harbour, we discovered some excavations. The first is an oval chamber lined with stucco, but of an irregular form, and without the smallest trace of ornament; we next came to a smaller one fourteen feet square, with no other opening but the door; and fifty-six feet further on, is a third chamber, twelve feet deep by twenty-one, with two door-ways; a fourth, eight feet by fifteen; and a fifth, terminated by the terrace, thirteen feet deep, in the recess of which is something like the bottom of an oven, and on the right, a hole which seems somewhat in the form of a window. There is a second story of these chambers equally irregular, but without any correspondence in the plan, or connection with the former. These have rather the appearance of hermit's grottoes, than any thing else. Round the third chamber of this story runs a gallery formed also out of the

the rock; and at the bottom of a paltry terrace, partly antique and partly modern, are two chambers, of which the lower receives light by a window, above seven feet from the ground. This is what they call the dressing-room of Calypso, but in reality it is more like a prison, than the apartment of a nymph. All the other chambers are cut out of the rock, without either care or embellishment, resembling neither the baths nor reservoirs of a palace, still less the elegant apartments we might expect in the enchanting abode of this voluptuous deity. In other respects, however, by destroying all that now exists, and imagining every thing which never could have existed, it may be possible to conceive a palace built on the flat raised ground, with gardens in the form of terraces reaching quite to the shore, where it is not improbable that unfortunate mariners, after their vessel had been dashed to pieces on one or other of the points of rocks which project into the sea, and form this creek, may have safely swum to land. We should find it rather difficult perhaps to know where to plant those cool and shady groves in which Telemachus sought and discovered the youthful Eucharis; for not a leaf

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of these is remaining, nor a spot of earth where it is practicable to replant them.

But to return to a somewhat more rational conjecture respecting a place become so interesting; it is possible that the beautiful fountain I have spoken of, being at the bottom of a very safe and commodious harbour for small vessels, may have been the first frequented, as well on account of the water, as from its situation; since it is the first port met with by mariners, on arriving from Africa, after doubling the Gozzo, which may have given rise to some rude settlements, of which these excavations are the remains.

We returned to the town, passing by the bottom of the bay where St. Paul was shipwrecked, and after crossing the handsome villages of Rabatto and Kercava, went under the aqueducts by which the Grand Master de Vignacourt brought the water from the only fountain belonging to the city. This scarcity of water at Malta is remedied by a prodigious number of cisterns, which are easily made, as nothing more is necessary than to arch over and convert into reservoirs the excavations that serve for quarries, and the foundations of their houses, so that each house has

has its own, and not a drop of rain water that falls upon the city is lost.

During our stay at Malta, a French squadron arrived, under the command of M. Fabri, consisting of four large ships and a frigate, which were joined by the *Cato*, all well provided and victualled, and promising to make us masters of those seas, and of the commerce of the Mediterranean. This was at once a spectacle for the city, and an embellishment for the harbour, which was now completely beautiful.

We were obliged to give up all thoughts of visiting Gozzo, for fear of exposing ourselves to the plague, or at least to a very rigorous quarantine. I regretted that I did not see and measure a wall there, said to be of Phœnician workmanship, the *Fungus* rock, and the quarry of alabaster resembling that of Asia, a great deal of which is worked at Malta, but unfortunately without taste or elegance.

The Greeks undoubtedly had settlements at Gozzo, for some coins of Gozzo itself are found, representing a head of Diana with a crescent over it, and on the other side, a soldier armed with a sword and buckler in

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the action of attack. I found one myself, but the inscription is nearly obliterated.

We were on the point of sailing, when our captain came to inform us, that a *speronare* just arrived, had been chased by a Barbary felucca, and begged that I would wait till the next day, when a Maltese vessel which was about to sail would keep us company. Even though we had not run the same risk, it would have been unjustifiable to disregard the fears of men, who, if taken, remain without hope, and abandoned to a state of slavery, the more severe, as the Mahometan states bear an implacable hatred to the Maltese.

R E T U R N T O S I C I L Y.

Our vessel did not sail the next day, but on the 17th of September, at five in the afternoon, we took our departure with a contrary wind, and went to take in ballast a mile from the city, on some rocks where salt is made in little pits, by introducing the sea water through small channels.

By the time we had compleated our ballast, night came on, and we rowed without any noise,

noise, doubling all the points, and keeping a good look out, not to be interrupted by the Turkish barks which we knew were on the coast. We crossed the *Cala di San Giuliano*, and anchored in the *Magdalena*, under the cannon of the tower. Here we went on shore amongst such dry and sharp rocks, that we durst not venture to the distance of fifty paces, for fear of getting a fall, and wounding ourselves in the dark. We put to sea again as soon as the night had thoroughly closed in, and our boatmen rowed as silently as possible, making scarcely any noise with their oars. At the *Cala di Santa Maria*, we met with another bark similar to our own, and rowing with the same caution ; the surprise and consternation of the crews were reciprocal, but their fears were removed before we were apprized of them. We continued our course, crossing *La Cala di San Paolo*, to the point of *La Melleba*, where we cast anchor to leeward, resolved to pass the night, and perhaps a part of the next day there, if the wind continued unfavourable.

Here we prepared ourselves to go to sleep, but about three in the morning of the 18th, a land breeze determined our boatmen to weigh anchor,

anchor, and make sail to get into the offing, and gain the channel. At break of day we fell in with the four gallies of the order, which inspired our people with fresh courage, who, totally forgetting their fears of the night before, assured us that the Maltese *Speronare* never were afraid of Turkish ships, of any size or sort. The wind dropped with the approach of day, and the calm obliged us to row till noon, when the westerly wind stopt us short with an insupportable swell. The smell of the toasted garlick of our sailors awakening our appetites, we exchanged our little stock of provisions for their coarse bread and savoury fare, which went down wonderfully well.

Towards the evening we made pretty good way before a fresh breeze, after having been in sight of *Gozzo* all day. The next morning I was awakened by the screams of an innumerable flock of curlews, which gave us notice of our approach to the coast of Sicily; and accordingly, on the 19th, at day-break, we discovered the point *Della Secca*, a dry and low land mixed with sand and rocks, on which are a few dwarf palm trees, but not a single habitation. We kept along the coast with so light a wind, that it was necessary to assist the vessel with

with our oars. Being now in perfect health, reconciled to the sea, and intirely satisfied with my voyage, I was far from foreseeing the misfortune that awaited us.

We passed by *Camerina*, which was treacherously surprised in the days of its glory by Dionysius the Tyrant, who took away the inhabitants during the siege of *Gela*, and delivered up the city to the Carthaginians, who, by treaty, agreed to abandon the siege of *Syracuse*, on condition of its remaining subject to Dionysius. *Camerina*, destitute from that period of walls or fortifications, was afterwards demolished, and now lies buried under the sand. Its territory belongs to the Prince de *Biscaris*, who, in the researches he has made at different times, has found there a number of curious and valuable antiquities, principally Grecian vases, which I have already spoken of under the head of *Catanea*. They are the most valuable in the Prince's cabinet, and perhaps the finest existing.

After passing the *Scoglietti*, we had a sight of *Biscaris* in the back ground, situated on an eminence. The wind now became adverse, but by dint of rowing we got in with *Terra Nuova*, built on a height. We were now

wholly taken up in tracing out and fixing there the true situation of the ancient Gela, of which it is said there is an intire Doric column still existing, though thrown down. Our plan was to proceed afterwards to *Calata-Girone*, a city little known to travellers, but which must have been the ancient *Hybla-Hærea*, where ancient coins are still found; and then to Syracuse, which we intended to make the boundary of all our labours.

Whilst our minds were intirely occupied with these pleasing ideas, we continued to approach, and had got close in with Terra Nuova; when on a sudden they cried out to us from the shore, “*Speronařa of Malta, to sea, to Trapani, to Messina, or Syracuse!*” We told them we were in perfect health, and had brought with us certificates from Malta. Their answer was, “*To sea, to sea!*” It was in vain that we attempted to reply; we found nothing to talk to but muskets pointed at us by a set of poltroons, who took the opportunity to be insolent with impunity, and appear brave where there was no danger. It was impossible however for us to obey. We dreaded their pieces less than the sea and hunger; we had only four pounds of bread among thirteen

teen of us, and not a drop of water. I inquired for the Governor, to whom I had letters of recommendation, but it was the hour for sleeping : he sent me word that he was sick, and would not come down to the harbour, but advised me to depart. I next sent for the Jurat, who happened to be the Vice-Consul ; but he answered, that no consideration should induce him to approach an infected bark, and that so far from seeing me, I had nothing to do but to quit the road, it being the duty of his office to compel me so to do ; and his rascally emissaries, whose number was every moment increasing, were but too well disposed to obey him. The populace too, taking a part in the affair, reviled and threatened us : the violence of my passion, however, seemed to keep them in awe ; I cried out, that if they drove us to extremities, I would go myself on shore, and put the whole island in quarantine, and woe be to the first who should venture to oppose me. I then took my gun, and advanced with so determined an air, that the populace fled, and the guard ran for safety behind a boat : I now declared, that I would not quit the shore, till we had received a supply of bread and water. They

bread

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were

were astonished at our resolution, and the more so, as our boatmen had already leapt into the water, and we seemed prepared to defend them, and proceed to the last extremities. They therefore demanded a truce, and sent a deputation to the Governor and Jurats; but they were behind the walls, and insolently sent to order us to be gone: with which order we should have been compelled finally to comply, at the risk of every thing that might happen, from a long passage, a contrary wind, and a coast we were every where equally prohibited from approaching, had not a Maltese, who happened to be the proprietor of the boat, fearing the accidents that might happen to it, and filled with indignation at the treatment we had received, taken upon himself to purchase us some bread, and prevail on them to bring us some wine and water; an action, which, in our circumstances appeared sublime.

During this negociation we were tormented with a heavy swell, which would have half killed me, but for my passion, or that temporary energy which great dangers so frequently inspire. Our provisions arrived by degrees, and we were obliged, with our muskets in our hands, to protect them on

board our vessel, to prevent them from being stolen from us out of the boat that brought them, by the same guards, who continually insulted the carriers. No longer daring to menace us, they turned their vengeance against every body who came to see what was passing ; they beat off the children, and all the inhabitants of Terra Nuova were obliged to climb the heights, and mount the walls and towers of the city, to obtain a sight of the people infected with the plague, who were in such perfect health. Our departure seemed like the raising of a siege. We then made a fresh attack upon our garlick and bread, and stood off to sea.

At every guard-house, they cried out to us in the same manner, “*Speronara of Malta, to sea, to Syracuse, or Messina!*” On the 20th, at noon, the wind blew so fresh right a-head, and our crew were so fatigued with rowing, that we cast anchor about four hundred paces from the land, under the point of *San Pietro*, a stony and barren part of the country. Our people had scarcely began to take some refreshment, when two guards popped out from a ruin, and told us to pursue our voyage. We answered that we had no intention of landing,

that we were beyond the prescribed limits, and begged they would suffer us quietly to wait for the wind. They were weary, however, of waiting in the sun. The solitude of the place, and the opportunity which seemed to them favourable for trying how far their guns would carry ball, tempted these gentry to compliment us with a bullet, which fortunately fell short. It being impossible to punish these two rascals without incurring the risk of a very long and troublesome affair, we submitted, and stood out a quarter of a mile farther to sea. On the firing of the musket, assistance came to them from a tower, and I know not what arms they brought, but whilst we were not dreaming of any danger, we heard the whistling of a ball over our heads, and a report like that of a carbine ; luckily it was ill directed, and the ball flew too high. We were now so far off, that though at noon day, we could not distinguish from their motions whether they were disposed to ply us with any more. But in spite of our unwillingness to stand out to sea and lose way, as the wind now was, we were compelled to adopt that measure.

Fortunately,

Fortunately a light breeze of the *Sirocco* carried us to a bay called *la Pouzalla*. It is in this bay that vessels come to load with carob beans, which are brought in such quantities to this part of the island, that we saw piles of them on the shore like heaps of coal.

In the evening the sky became overcast, and threatened us with an equinoctial hurricane. Not being anywhere allowed to approach the shore, and having as much to fear from the land as the sea, we went in search of some safe creek to pass the night, at least under shelter from the wind. Our crew set every sail, and plied their oars in order to double the islands named the *Formiches*, and the point of the bay of *la Morsa*, or *San Pietro*, to take refuge under an angular rock, called *Il Castelluccio*, which we luckily reached late enough not to be discovered by the centry, and in such weather as to prevent him from venturing out of his hovel, to visit the bay formed by the perpendicular cliff under which we anchored.

This sheltered road is a harbour sketched out by nature, on a still larger scale than that

of Syracuse, and which would be extremely advantageous in point of situation, were not its mouth so wide as to suffer heavy seas to enter, and were it not from the lowness of its coasts exposed to all the fury of the land gales. Though it is three miles wide, and runs still further up into the land, there is no safety in it but for small barks, and that only at the point where we brought to. To give the wind less hold, we hauled down all our canvas, and crept under the sails, like snails retiring into their shells, in order to make the best we could of our situation for the night. The lightning flashed continually; and the thunder rumbled, though at a distance. We slept till two hours before day-light, when a violent clap awakened the whole crew, and brought them all upon their legs. This stroke was followed by what may be termed a general broadside and a rolling fire; the report did not wait for the lightning, and there was a fresh flash before the end of each clap of thunder. All this was nothing to those who neither dreaded the thunder, nor the lightning; but on a sudden we felt our bark heaving and plunging, and found the water entering by the scuppers, the wind pressing the sail that

that covered us, the rain and the waves dash-
ing over and beating on it, while the cross
poles that supported it began to crack, give
way, and break, and our tilt torn to pieces
by a dreadful squall, buried all our rowers
under it. The rain which fell like sheets of
water, filled our boat, overwhelmed us, and
preventing respiration, deprived us of speech
and all our senses. Our boatmen, no less ter-
rified than we, whilst they were struggling to
disentangle themselves from the sails under
which they lay, cried out to each other, all at
once, "*Grebja, Grebja, Grebja.*" I know not
how it was that I conceived this to mean ei-
ther the anchor, or the rope that held it;
but opening my eyes as well as I could, and
by the light of the flashes, perceiving the land
to be at three miles distance, and our vessel
abandoned to the waves, I concluded we were
in the open sea, and that all was over with
us. The despair, the cries and invocations
of the crew, confirmed me in the persuasion
that we were without resource. The thunder
was so violent and so near, that our boatmen
fell down half dead at every clap. *now 37*
Amidst such danger, nothing was more
dreadful than the darkness of the night, ex-
cept

cept the lightning that shewed us our situation. I knew not whether to wish for the open sea, or to be dashed upon the rocks : I was standing up. One of our company, who was by my side, wrapping his head in his cloak, had resigned himself to death. Another, at some distance, was seeking for me, and calling me. Hearing my voice, he stretched out his arms, exclaiming, " Oh ! my dear friend !" " My friend," replied I, " we must first combat death, then learn to die, if there be no resource." " We will perish, or be saved together," said he, " embracing me." This impulse of sensibility, at so critical a moment, made me feel that there are enjoyments for every instant of existence. I leaped towards the rope by which our anchor was fastened, and found that it still held. This news I soon reported to my companions, and communicated to them the hope and courage with which this discovery had inspired me. It seemed as if we were restored to life; but this life still held by a thread, and this thread was strained to the utmost.

We were driving with a little anchor, and a rope not half the thickness of a finger; to ease it we fastened our stone ballast to ropes, and

and sunk it, and the sailors prevailing with their oars, we again got under our protecting rock. When the hurricane was over (for, luckily for our poor resources, it was but a passing squall) almost up to our knees in water, and shivering with the cold, we collected our wet cloaths, and got together in a heap to warm each other. Day soon making its appearance, exhibited our disastrous situation, and presented a most laughable scene. This was the discovery we made, after a long search, of my poor valet de chambre, who had wedged himself between some planks, where he had lost all sense. We extricated him with some difficulty, and he revived. He seemed as if returned from the other world. He stared about him, was filled with astonishment at seeing, speaking to, and hearing us, and revealed to us the miracle of his patron St. Anthony, who, at the instant the water was reaching his belly, inspired him with the idea of covering his head with a shaving bason used at sea; people, he said, being always drowned by the ears, and the bason, by covering them, had saved his life. He then confessed to us, that no longer hearing any thing when thus equipped, he imagined

gined we were all dead, and in these circumstances was waiting for St. Anthony to dispose of him; and concluded, by assuring us, that we were wholly indebted for our preservation to the immediate protection with which this saint had honoured him, and that the first thing we did therefore ought to be to return thanks to the saint, after which he promised immediately to give us a change of linen.

After drying ourselves as well as we could, and making a complete breakfast, we once more put to sea, and passed between the *Isles of the currents* and the continent. These islands are only shoals or points of rocks rising above the surface of the water. We here met with the returning sea which had been driven off by the land wind, and on its becoming calm, was on its way back to the coast, in swells that lifted us to an immense height, only to precipitate us into profound abysses. Here was it that my stomach passed the last trial. We rowed before the port *di Paolo*, which is not unlike a lake situated in a plain, for nothing can be flatter than the lands of this point. After twelve miles passage, we at length arrived at *Cape Paffaro*, the ancient *Pachynum*, so subject to gales of wind, and so

being

dangerous

dangerous on that account. The land, though low, is beset with little rugged and inacceffible rocks. Time has converted this point into an island, as there is reason to believe, from the shallowness of the water on the space between it and the main land, and the small points of rocks by which it still seems to adhere to it. We passed over the shoal, which is about a mile in width. On the island is a fortified castle, in the form of a large square tower, containing a garrison, who seem as if exiled to the extremity of the earth.

The wind was contrary, and we humbly demanded permission to take in some water, or to remain under the wind; but they refused us both, and notwithstanding the heavy sea and the appearance of a fresh storm, we were obliged to gain the offing to avoid the coast, which in this place is dangerous, without safe anchorage, and almost inacceffible. As fortune would have it, a very fresh sirocco, pressed forward by heavy clouds, sprung up right a-stern, and drove us forty miles in less than four hours.

This eastern part of Sicily is much more agreeable to the eye, than the southern side. We discovered those rich vales watered by the river

river *Helorum*, now called the *Abisso*, whose overflowings, Virgil tells us, fertilized its borders, like the Nile. At a distance we perceived *Avola*, the country round which produced the first sugar known to us and to the ancients.

S Y R A C U S E.

As soon as we had doubled *Cape Longo*, we discovered *Syracuse*, at the distance of six miles, which, although no city be more degenerated if we compare its present state with its ancient splendour, still inspired us, from the beauty of its situation, with respect and reverence. The face of the country is as grand and noble, as the events that have distinguished it in history are great and celebrated. On entering its spacious harbour, I recalled to mind the innumerable fleets it had formerly received and contained ; the battles fought by the Athenians within its circumference ; that triumphant people of Afric, who there found their tombs ; to the left, I viewed the plain where they encamped ; to the right, the isle of *Ortygia*, which is the modern town, and was anciently but

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the fortress and castle of Dionysius; at the bottom, those opulent quarters of *Neapolis*, of *Tyche*, and *Achradina*, enriched with temples built by Hiero during the perfection of the fine arts, and by the men who had exercised them the most successfully.

All these beautiful and grand ideas completely vanished, on our being compelled to land at a wretched hovel, called the Health Office, where three or four dull fellows, ill dressed, and with starched phizzes, came to propose to us by way of lazaretto, a hillock of ten paces square, without any shelter; a spot of ground too, which cannot be obtained without solicitation, and which must be defended to be preserved. But as every thing appears good to men escaped from shipwreck, we lost no time in landing, once more to feel ourselves on terra firma. The next day they offered to build a hut for us at our expense, and another for the guard destined to torment us; but as we had not come to Syracuse for the express purpose of building a lazaretto, we convinced the Deputation of Health that they were obliged to suffer us to haul our vessel on shore, in which we resolved to take

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up our lodging till the embargo should be removed.

Unfortunately for us, the lazarettoes of Sicily are farmed, and with them our healths, our money, and our patience; accordingly the farmers turn every thing to account. There is no species of vexation, no abominable meanness which they do not exercise towards those poor wretches, who, like us, fall into the snare; for this port, so circumstanced, deserves no other appellation. The court are ignorant, doubtless, in appointing a quarantine, that there is neither a lodging, nor a shed, nor even ground enough for the prows of the little barks that may come hither, to rest on; and that the farmers pay more attention to the profits of their contract, than the possibility of furnishing subsistence for those who are so unfortunate as to arrive at this wretched substitute for a lazaretto.

These negligences of government fall ultimately on the nation, and justify that contempt which the Maltese entertain for the Sicilian mode of carrying on commerce. And indeed it is very strange, united as they are by mutual wants and political interests, that the two courts should be perpetually employed

ed in remonstrances and replies, on account of the shackles with which they are continually loading their commerce.

After having been witnesses to all the mean rapacity of this class of the Sicilian nation, to the meanness our impatience compelled them to exhibit; and having suffered martyrdom for eight and twenty long days, in a quarantine unjustly imposed on us; sleeping all this time without distinction among the sailors, drenched every night by the excessive rains of the season, scorched by the heat of the sun at noon, and exposed every evening to a wind that made our bones ache as in a fever; we at length got out of this infected hole, covered with vermin and sores, and with our clothes so torn from not having been off our backs for a whole month together, that they would scarcely hang on any longer. In this situation a blessed vicar general, who, in the absence of his bishop, to whom we were recommended, had alleviated our miseries as much as he could, and procured us all the comforts in his power, was so obliging as to lodge us in the episcopal palace.

Our curiosity first led us to visit the fountain *Arethusa*, which, after three times chang-

ing its place, is at present to the westward of the island, the centre of which it is said to have once occupied before earthquakes had altered its situation, troubled and profaned the purity of its source, divided and destroyed its channels, and mingled with the limpidity and sweetnes of its waters, the filtrations of the bitter wave.

Every body knows the ingenious fiction on which the Greeks have built the history of this fountain, which they deified. The nymph Arethusa, a companion of Diana, and brought up in the austere principles of that goddess, rejected the love of the river Alpheus, and was metamorphosed into a fountain, in order to escape him ; but the river resuming his form, in the pursuit mingled his waters with those of the flying fountain. To unite ourselves with those we love, is certainly the most pleasing of unions ! This Arethusa, who was so dear to Diana, and to whom divine honours were so universally paid, that Hercules himself offered sacrifices of bulls to her ; this Arethusa, in fine, whose waters fed an innumerable number of sacred fish, is now nothing more than a copious spring of brackish sulphureous water, escaping between sorry rocks,

rocks, and flowing into a sort of angular basin, formed by two old, but not antique walls; where the dirtiest linen is washed by a number of still dirtier women, who, almost naked, and with their petticoats tucked up, present the most disgusting scene immodesty can possibly display.

By the side of this fountain other channels conduct the waters from the same spring, in streams equally abundant, to tanneries and other works: the remainder, divided in scattered conduits, runs off on all sides; is either lost, or is recovered by any person who chuses to dig in the quarter it once occupied, and finally discharges itself into the sea, by a number of channels, still distinguishable round the island at low water.

Notwithstanding the wretched condition of this fountain, on seeing the copiousness of its waters, we ceased to be astonished at its celebrity; for it certainly appears miraculous, that from the centre of a rock almost surrounded by the sea, a spring should break out in streams, which, when united, must rather have resembled the mouth of a river than a fountain. From all appearance it had a grand and spacious basin, as Diodorus tells us; it

contained a quantity of fish, which could not be touched without offending Diana; a circumstance that might induce us to imagine that this basin must have been near the temple of the goddess; and this temple was in the centre of the island, at a considerable distance from the modern fountain. At the mouth of the harbour is discovered in the sea, when it is calm, the ebullition of a copious spring, rising up from the bottom, without mingling its waters till they reach the surface. Though this be a well known phænomenon in other places, here it accommodates itself happily to the fiction of the river Alpheus, who, rolling his waters through those of the sea, all the way from *Elis*, came hither to mingle them pure and undiminished with those of his beauteous nymph. But the present stream is no longer that amorous river: at this day, sorrowfully divorced, he resembles only an old husband obliged to separate beds with his now prostituted spouse. I frequently sought after this river or spring, but was always prevented from distinguishing it, either by the wind, or the height of the sea.

Near this fountain was the palace of *Verres*, and that delicious walk which Cicero accuses

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the proconsul of converting into a scene of debauchery. It is still the publick walk ; but it has now no delights, and is nothing but a narrow sauntering place between a great wall and the parapet of the harbour, planted with a few sorry birches. On close examination, at the bottom of the wall, near a fountain, which is another division of Arethusæ, are discovered two fragments of reticulated building, a Roman work, which may perhaps have belonged to the palace of Verres.

We now proceeded to the interiour part of the island, which fell to the share of Diana, on the partition of Sicily between Minerva, Proserpine, and that goddes ; whence this quarter was named *Ortygia*, one of the appellations of Diana. It was always the principal division of the city, as it commanded both the harbours, and became the residence of the tyrants, who fortified it. The Romans were so well aware of the advantages of its situation, that they would never suffer it to be inhabited by a Syracusan.

I sought for the temples of Diana, and Minerva, for the palaces of Dionysius, his gardens, and tomb, and those famous baths

of the celebrated Daphnis, the son of Mercury and a nymph, that inventor of pastoral poetry, who charmed Diana by his song and verses, and was punished with blindness for his infidelity. What I found most evident, and in the best preservation, was the temple of Minerva, converted into a cathedral; a change that has greatly disfigured this edifice, which, like the others, was of the Doric order without a base. Agio, the tenth bishop of Syracuse, was the first who changed this temple into a church. In our days, the western side of it has been demolished to build the front; the internal wall has been broken into arcades, and the intercolumniations filled up in order to form side aisles, and give more width to the modern temple. There remain, however, in the side, eleven inserted columns, and four of the fifteen which formed the length of the temple are wanting; a dimension too long for the six columns it had in width. The interior columns, however, which formed the gate of the temple, leave no room to doubt the former existence of two intercolumniations wanting in the pediment. The architrave is preserved, and we still see the long stones that connected the columns with the

the interiour wall, and formed a cieling, in the style of a platband, round the peristyle of the building. The temple is said formerly to have had a vaulted roof, and that an earthquake in 1542 threw down this roof. In that case, it still remains a question whether it was antique; thus much however is certain, that the earthquake was so violent, as to occasion a shrink in the entablature, and to throw several columns off their centre. The dimension of these columns was short, and the intercolumniation wide; they rested without bases on three ranges of stone of nine inches thickness, which were themselves supported by the native rock. It is a singular circumstance, that the two interiour columns should be higher than the exterior ones, and that they should be each of them of a single stone. History tells us likewise, that over the portico was a tower, on which a shining buckler was displayed, and seen from a great distance, and that when vessels, leaving the port, lost sight of this buckler, they threw their offerings into the sea, to obtain the favour of Neptune and Minerva. All this might be effected without the tower, for the height of the temple itself, and its natural situation,

situation, rendered it a sufficient mark, as we may still judge from its remains.

It is difficult to determine, whether or no we have any cause to regret that this temple has been spoiled by being converted into a church; for it may be observed, that if the ancient edifice be disfigured by the modern building, there is every reason to believe, that but for this metamorphosis, hardly a fragment of it would be left; witness the temple of Diana, not far from it, which is so demolished, that without the most minute researches, we might very well doubt whether it had ever existed.

The traveller must now go in search of this famous temple, the first erected at Syracuse, in the chamber of a private individual named Danieli, in the street of *Resalibra*, where by the side of his bed, we still discover two capitals on their shafts, which have been cut, to enlarge the apartment. The columns are buried more than half their height, and are so near each other, that there is only a separation of a few inches between the two capitals. The proprietor, whilst he was making some repairs, and digging a cistern, found two other shafts of columns, one

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of them a corner one, and the other the returning column of the west side. We made all possible researches to discover some vestiges of the east side, which would have given us the size of the temple, and the number of its columns; but we saw nothing, except in the office of a notary, named Rosso, where we found the two other sides of the capitals of the same columns we had first discovered.

From hence we went to the castle situated on the point of the island. Here we found some ruins of a castle built in 1039 by a Greek Viceroy, named George Maniace. The gate is still remaining, ornamented in the style of that age, but with magnificence: it is lined with a beautiful and precious marble; torn doubtless from some of the antique buildings, and disfigured before it was thus employed. To the right of the gate, we saw large remains of the inside of this prince's palace: the architecture is destitute of proportion. The columns are short, the large capitals of no determinate order, supporting acute arches, and the whole constructed with great blocks of free stone. It had been converted into a powder magazine; which blew up many years ago, when great part of the edifice then remaining was destroyed.

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What is still left of it seems to me either to have been a vestibule, or hall, for the guards ; and is only curious, because it preserves the style of building in that age. The castle is very advantageously situated, and commands the entrance of the harbour, which it is well able to defend. At this point was fastened the chain that closed it in, by stretching over to the point of *Plemmyrium*, on the opposite side ; and here the last naval battle was fought, which deprived the Athenians of all hopes of safety, and took place so near the walls, that the Syracusans animated the combatants with their shouts.

From the castle we went to the church of San Phelippo, in which we found a well, hewn out of the natural rock, round which a winding stair-case, cut likewise out of the rock, descends to the water, which is only two or three feet deep. It is said to have been a bath; but why should so laborious a work be executed to seek in the dark for a bath only three feet in diameter, and of which the water is raw and cold as ice ? An idea of the whole excavation is conveyed, by describing it as a well, scooped out of the centre of a winding stair-case. At intervals there

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were apertures over the well, apparently to give light and air to the stair-case, which served perhaps to clean out the bottom, and keep the water as limpid as it now is. Between the twentieth and thirtieth steps, we find a long and low subterraneous passage terminated by nothing, and without any regular form.

From hence we repaired to another cavern, in the street del Caputo, at the house of Joseph Bianca, in the court of which we found the entrance of a modern stair-case, descending to an ancient one, four feet six inches wide, hewn out of the rock; and after several steps, we discovered a landing-place formerly lighted by an aperture; then a second flight of twelve steps, leading to a chamber ten feet square, rounded at the corners, with four square pillars supporting a sharp roof, the whole cut with an able chisel in an extremely hard and even rock. This subterranean chamber was discovered a few years ago, and is in perfect preservation. When first discovered, there was a hole on the left, which gave an entrance into another subterraneous gallery, containing tombs like those of the catacombs. The Chevalier de Landolina, who entered it one of the first, made the most minute researches,

searches, but could find nothing to throw the smallest light on the age in which these tombs had been in use. The bones of the skeletons were entire; but this by no means proves them not to have been Roman, for the practice of burying dead bodies was not introduced among them till long after they had possessed Sicily. Be that as it may, these tombs had no connection with the first cavern; the crevice by which they communicated being merely accidental. It would be very difficult to decide what this monument may have really been, as nothing has been found to give any insight into its use. All we see in it is a small iron ring inserted into the centre of the roof, and no doubt intended to suspend a lamp by. May it not have been a small temple for some mysterious worship? Or was it simply a cellar? It had a seat in it which ran along both sides. It is now converted into a reservoir of water, by blocking up the opening that communicated with the sepulchres.

Passing through the streets, we found near the senatorial palace, in the house of the Cavalier Salonia, a large vase of burnt earth, like that I had seen in the court of the

seum of the Prince de Biscaris. These great vases, of an enormous weight, serve to preserve in an unaltered state, either grain or fluids. This I am speaking of, is of a round shape, and resting on a point, is four feet eight inches high by the same diameter, with this mark on the neck near its mouth,

$\text{XXVIII}5$ signifying probably the quantity it would contain. In the court of the senatorial palace, I saw a tomb of white marble, seven feet four inches six lines in length, by three feet and an inch wide, and two feet eight inches high, of a single block: The door, which is in the form of a pediment, has neither sculpture nor inscriptions. It was found some years ago near the temple of the Olympian Jupiter. In it were some vases and an eagle in ivory, which may lead us to imagine it to have been the sarcophagus of one of consular dignity.

In the court of the bishop's palace is a square marble, with the following inscription in beautiful Greek characters:

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΣ ΑΤΕ
ΙΕΡΩΝΟΣ ΙΕΡΟΚΑΕΟΣ
ΣΤΡΑΚΟΣΙΟΙ ΘΕΟΙΣ ΠΑΣΙ.

Explication.

Explication.

“Sotto la Guida del re Jeron, figlio di
Jerocle, i Syracusani a tutti dei.”

Under the direction of King Hiero, son of Hierocles, the Syracusans to all the gods.

This monument gives us the true name of Hiero's father, which history has not preserved. From three holes in the stone, it may be presumed that a tripod was attached to it, rather than a statue.

We went afterwards out of the city, by the only approach there is to it on the land side. This side, at all times famous for its fortifications, was formerly called *The Citadel*. Here it was that Dionysius fixed his chief residence, when after his return from raising the siege of *Gela*, he found himself abandoned by his cavalry, and on the point of losing his crown. This castle, from its situation, was become so strong, and was so well defended on this side, that the tyrant was besieged in it to no purpose; and that his son, devoid alike of political and military talents, was able so to defend himself, that Timoleon could never have

have succeeded in his attack, but for the defection of his troops. Nor is this situation less important at present. Noble forts, vast bastions, detached fortresses, wide ditches by which the sea enters and connects the great and lesser harbour, all unite to present the eye with the formidable works of a great and warlike city, and prepare us for nothing less than the small winding streets and wretched habitations we find on entering.

This spot, so often built, rebuilt, excavated, hewn, and fortified after the mode of each period, is consequently the quarter which has suffered the most, with respect to its ancient form. In vain we seek there for the valuable remains of antiquity. It is said, however, that some subterraneous passages are still remaining, that communicated from the castle with all the quarters of the city, but I neither saw any, nor could I ask to see them.

Continuing our walk, we passed over some bridges, which, having been built in the place where once was an isthmus, still unite the island with Achradina, the second quarter of ancient Syracuse. This part, which besides being lower and less stony, is watered by the ancient aque-

ducts, is now covered with country houses; we did not discover any ancient remains either of buildings, or of the walls that separated this quarter from the others.

Leaving Achradina on the right, and entering Neapolis, we first found the amphitheatre, which we know was in Neapolis, close to the walls of Achradina. This amphitheatre was built on an uneven spot of ground, and was partly hewn out of the rock, and partly built of huge stones, with vaulted galleries. Its form was a large oval, very long in the transverse diameter, and narrow in the conjugate. On the whole, we may say it is a very indifferent edifice, and was erected by the Romans, as well as that of Tarentum, and for the sole use of the Roman colony; for we know that the Greeks were never present at those kind of exhibitions for which amphitheatres were constructed, holding them even in horror, and not having in their language so much as a term to signify these edifices. The proprietor of this building, little curious about antiquity, has very lately demolished part of the arched roofs of the galleries, and carried off the remainder of the seats, in order to cultivate the ground it stood on.

Near

Near the amphitheatre are the ruins of a theatre, the seats of which were entirely hewn out of the rock, and would have been in perfect preservation, were not stones daily carried away as from a quarry, and were not every person who pleases, at liberty to destroy them. Great part of these seats, however, still distinguishable, as well as the two landing places for the distribution of the spectators. The steps have this peculiarity, that there are smaller steps on each side, subdividing the ends of the seats for the spectators. This contrivance, which is found in no other of the ancient theatres I ever saw, originated in the necessity there was of distributing the spectators on the three sets of seats ; and as between each set there was a wide footway, which caused a considerable elevation from its level to that of the lowest bench of the upper set, the steps which led from the upper part to this footway was necessarily more sloping than the benches, in order to reach the level of the retreat. The spectators who intended to take their places in the upper set, quitted therefore the main flight, and mounted by one of those annexed to it, which followed the

slope of the benches, and distributed the company in each of them ; whilst those who wished to place themselves in the lower rows, continued to ascend by the great staircase in the middle, which, being more steep, brought them on a level with the footway, from whence they proceeded to disperse themselves, by similar flights, as far as the orchestra.

This ingenious contrivance will be better understood from the plan.* On the side of the first row of the second landing place, there was a Greek inscription on a tablet projecting from the rock itself : Some letters of it are still visible. The learned of Syracuse have daily discussions concerning the age of this inscription, which was as follows :

ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΦΙΛΙΣΤΙΔΟΣ

“ Of Queen PHILISTIS.”

We know of a queen Philistis, the wife of Hiero. But it could not be this queen who built the theatre, which was constructed before the days of the Tyrant Dionysius ; there must then have been another queen Philistis whom history does not mention. But indeed there

* See *Voyage Picturesque des deux Siciles. Tome 4.*

are said to have been the portraits of four and twenty tyrants of Syracuse, in the temple of Minerva; the names of fifteen of whom have never reached us. There is a notch in the upper part of each row of seats to support the feet of the persons on the higher ones, that they might not incommod those who sat below them.

An upper gallery, the platform of which we still discover in some parts, probably supported an architectural order, with a corridor or row of covered boxes. We still discover likewise one of the angles of the fore-scene. Upon the whole, this theatre, though very spacious, was not proportioned to the grandeur of the city, such as it was in the reign of Hiero; but was large enough perhaps, when it was built, before the quarters of Tycha and Neapolis were added to those of Ortygia and Achradina. Its situation, however, was perfectly beautiful, nearly on the confines of the four quarters. The spectators had a full view of the open sea, of the island, of both the harbours, of the delightful plains watered by the Anapus, of the temple of Jupiter Olympius, of the Forum, of Achradina, and all Neapolis.

Notwithstanding the intire destruction, or at least ruinous state, of the quarters and edifices I have just enumerated, this is still one of the most delightful places in the world, and presents a most grand and picturesque landscape. The ancient aqueducts still convey hither a considerable stream of water that turns a mill, and is sufficient to turn four. That which escapes on every side, forms a number of cascades, waters plants of the most exquisite verdure, and nourishes the growth of a multitude of magnificent poplars. Bountiful nature contrasts this so happily too with the cleft rocks, broken aqueducts, modern structures, the burnt colour of the earth, and the beauty of the sky, that a painter must despair of ever being able to collect and imagine all these objects, which nature alone has here given him to copy.

Near this are the latomiæ, or quarries, so celebrated in history, in which the Athenians were confined and crowded together after their defeat; whither the tyrants sent those from whom they feared opposition to their tyranny; and where their unhappy prisoners grew old, and died, leaving a second generation of sufferers. This extensive space, originally formed for the purpose

purpose of procuring stones, became in the end an enclosure as vast as it was fearful. A circumference of upwards of two acres, hewn perpendicularly to the height of one hundred feet out of the rock, and closed by a wall preserved out of the solid of the same rock, formed the first space that preceded those large and prodigious grottos, the deepest of which is the celebrated *Ear of Dionysius*.

It may be observed, that time, which in general deforms every thing previous to its destruction, has here produced a very different effect; for, abstracted from the awe antiquity inspires, we discover at this day nothing but a situation both rich and picturesque, and the most beautiful outlines for an English garden. The earthquakes which have overthrown the wall that constituted the prison, have formed it into noble rocks; whilst others, displaced and rolled in different shapes and directions, have made a happy diversity from that cold and formal symmetry, which is the produce of art and labour. The aqueducts which conveyed the water to the prisoners, being now broken, suffer it to escape on all sides, and to fall on the same rocks, which it colours and clothes with creeping plants, now decking them with garlands, or covering

them with a carpeting of verdant moss, over which it flows, divides itself, and sparkling in pearls and brilliants, falls in little cascades, and bathes the plain below, cultivated and planted with all sorts of fruit trees, and teeming with vegetables.

Across and at the bottom of these pyramidal or suspended rocks, is discovered the entrance of three vast grottos. The first is that in which they make the salt of nitre: smoke is continually issuing forth from its blackened entrance, and the view we have in the back ground, of the fire, the furnaces, and workmen, remind us of the forges of Vulcan, or the entrance into the infernal shades. The second, in another style and of a less harsh colouring, is a large flat roof, supported by great pillars left in the rock, the most of them so corroded by time, as to have the appearance only of large suspended stalactites. Such is the prodigious extent of these grottos, and the sonorousness of their cavity, that the smallest noise destroys the tranquility of these sanctuaries of stillness, which seem to be the temple of silence built in a desert. The third is that we call the *Ear of Dionysius*. It appears narrow, gloomy, and awful. It is the

cave

cave of the Sibyl. No echo can be more sensible, but it is rather the sonorousness of an instrument than an echo. It resounds and re-echoes, but repeats only at the entrance. It is in short the most spacious and most beautiful sonorous cavern perhaps existing. This latomia, considered with all its adjuncts in its present state, is a sublime and enchanting place; but when we reflect on the labour and misery these excavations must have cost the unhappy men who formed them, the dreadful torments of which they were at once the instrument, and the place of infliction, the charm vanishes: we behold nothing but the prison, the chains, the tortures, and the tyrant; we wish to fly, and at the entrance shudder with the apprehension of meeting Dionysius.

We lighted a torch to examine the profundity of this dungeon, said to be the invention of that Tyrant. Its form is that of a bell; that is to say, the grotto gradually becomes narrower from the base up to two thirds of its height, when it preserves the same dimension in rising, and forms at length a small elliptical arch, the key of which is exactly in the shape of the letter S, and continues

tinues insensibly inclining to the end of the grotto, which terminates in a square. In the middle of the right side is a square chamber, hollowed also out of the rock, which appeared to us a later work. An elevation of six or seven feet of earth, accumulated by time, deprive this cavity of a great deal of its original void, spacious as it still is, and in part deadens the echo, though that is still very considerable. The sides, which were hewn very even, are smoothed by a coat of stalactites deposited by the damp, and nothing is to be distinguished in the walls but some holes, for the purpose of raising scaffolds, and rings cut in the stone ; of the use of which it is very difficult either to obtain or give a just idea. If they were formed to secure prisoners, some of them must have been fastened at the height of fifteen feet ; which may lead us to imagine that this prison was excavated at different periods, and that the height of these rings was varied by the sinking of the ground. It is certain, however, that prisoners never were fastened to these notches except with straps or cords, this sort of ring being unable to sustain the friction and pressure of other iron rings. It is extremely doubtful too, whether they ever were applied

applied to any such purpose; and it appears to me still more doubtful whether this place ever was a prison formed by Dionysius to discover the secrets of his prisoners. On an inspection of the whole cavern, I can discover no reasons favourable to this opinion, unless we are determined blindly to persist in an ancient error, out of respect for its antiquity; an antiquity which is no more than a popular tradition, wholly unsupported by any historical authority. History indeed informs us, that this Tyrant had prisons near his palace, where those state prisoners were put to the torture, with whose projects it was his interest to be acquainted; but the latomiæ were not contiguous to his palace. These quarries are not named when mention is made of that particular prison. The latomiæ were public prisons, in which the slaves and criminals were made to work, and not a place intended to extort the secrets of prisoners: besides that, the latomiæ were known long before the time of Dionysius, since the Athenians were confined in them after their defeat. Had this cavern been fabricated for the use in question, it would not have been formed of this depth, for ages have been necessary to its excavation:

excavation : Tyrants must have speedier means to still their fears, and gratify their passions. Nor could this contrivance have succeeded more than once ; the moment the use of it was known, the tyrant's intention was defeated. And then what possibility of hearing, of distinguishing, and following the thread of conversation in a place, where, when three persons speak, the sounds are confounded with each other, and produce only an unintelligible and inarticulate noise.

History tells us likewise, that this prison was only for the multitude, like the gallies with us, and never for great criminals, or prisoners of distinction ; and that when Dionysius sent thither Philoxenus the Dithyrambic poet, who had said the Tyrant's verses were bad, it was to punish by humbling, and not tormenting him ; since, a few days after, this poet, being at table with the sovereign, who was again reading some poetry, exclaimed, “ *Take me back to the quarries.* ” ^a These then

* Dionysius pardoned him this folly, and was the first to laugh at it. We may conclude therefore, that if Dionysius wrote bad verses, he had no objection to a good joke, when well timed. We know some great princes who have a little more rancour !

were

were quarries, which had been originally worked by freemen, and afterwards converted into prisons. The government eventually availed itself of their spacious enclosure to confine that multitude of prisoners of war who were made slaves; here they laboured for the publick edifices, remained here their whole lives, married, and had children born to slavery.

These caverns being thus peopled, it became necessary to provide for their subsistence, and most urgent wants of their inhabitants: hence the aqueducts we still find here, those masses of incrusted bricks, around the place, for the purpose of distributing the water. A shelter must likewise be furnished them as a protection from the excessive heat of the sun, and the rains of winter. With this view they were employed to continue the same works, and excavate grottos; to secure the solidity of which, and guard against decay, they adopted this form which is proved to be the best; the lapse of so many ages having produced no change in it, nor any sort of decay from the filtration of the water. But to return to those who have no eyes

eyes but to see *ears*, we may observe to them, that there is another *ear* begun at the other end of the latomia, in the grotto where they make the nitre. The same form of roof and grotto is to be found likewise in the latomia of Achradina, in what is called the Forest of the Capuchins. So that there is no want of *ears*; and Dionysius must either have often copied his own works, or was not the inventor of this contrivance. 'Tis true there is in the famous one, a small chamber in an external opening of the roof, where the listener is said to have taken his stand.

As I was considered as a captious critick for presuming to follow the dictates of my own reason, I was willing to neglect nothing which might either serve to confirm me in my opinion, or induce me to change it. I resolv'd therefore to go up to this chamber, in which attempt I succeeded with some difficulty, and this is what I saw: an apartment of ten feet six inches long, by four feet wide, narrowing itself to the width of two feet ten, square at the end, and rudely hewn; to the left, a step of a foot high, and a sort of slip three feet wide by six in length, reaching the

aperture

aperture of the grotto which is only two feet six inches in this peak: this slip follows the form of the channel of the roof. The door by which I entered, seemed to me to have been opened only by time, which has so wasted the rock as to leave but six inches thickness on this side: the whole is of clumsy workmanship, without the smallest token to indicate the use to which this particular cavity was appropriated, not a seat to sit on, not a single inscription, nor can we observe even the wear and smoothness of all inhabited places. Against the sides, I saw nothing but a series of holes, two feet distant from each other, and at four inches from the top: these holes seemed to me to continue through the whole length of the channel at the same height.

I now began the experiment of the voice. I first placed myself at the aperture of the grotto, and as long as only one person spoke with his natural tone of voice, I heard him distinctly, in whatever part of the grotto he stood, as well as if I had been below. When he spoke in a low voice, and as if in a whisper, I hear a buzzing, but nothing articulate; and when two persons spoke together, I no longer heard any thing but the rustling of discordant

cordant and confused sounds, without being able to distinguish a single word. I repeated the same experiment at the bottom of the channel, and at the entrance of the chamber, where I found all the effects diminished. I then placed myself at the bottom of the chamber, and no longer could hear any thing: that is to say, I lost all the effect of the sonorousness of the cavity, and could only hear the noise of a conversation, too distant for me to distinguish a word of it. I attentively examined every part without this chamber, to see if I could discover any method of arriving at it, since the latomia has been worked lower than its level, and I was perfectly convinced that since that time there has been no other way of getting there, but that I took, which certainly is not the most commodious, and has only been made use of by persons determined to gratify their curiosity.

In fine, after thoroughly satisfying myself that this aperture was not a listening chamber, that there was nothing either interesting or mysterious in it, but the situation, which dating from its excavation, carries us back to the period when the quarry was at that height, I quitted the place, fully persuaded that

that every thing marvellous about this great
monument consists in the immensity of the work,
and the perfect evenness in the quality of
the stone, which, added to the form given
to it, secured its eternal duration, so that there
can be no doubt of its continuing to exist
three thousand years hence, such as it has al-
ways been.

I had the satisfaction to find that my conjectures perfectly coincided with those of the Chevalier Landolina, who was so good as to undertake to gratify my curiosity, and in whose hands I reckon myself fortunate to have been placed. Besides his extreme politeness in accompanying and assisting me in my most minute researches, he added all the information which can be procured by study and reflection. Attentive to what he sees, learned in all his discussions, guided by taste, good sense, and impartiality, in the inquiries he makes to fix his judgment, I know no person who from acquired knowledge, and from character, is better qualified than he is, to write history. Fortunately he is now employed in this pursuit; and if he has deferred laying his works before the world, it may safely be affirmed, that when they appear they will long remain,

and not resemble those ephemeral productions which cease to exist as soon as they are known.

But we have said enough of these latomiae, and perhaps too much of the Ear of Dionysius. Let us tear ourselves from this charming spot, which stands in no need of fable to be celebrated and interesting, and pass on to other curiosities. Pursuing our road between the latomiae and the theatre, we ascended an antique street formed out of the rock that bordered the enclosure of Achradina. It was lined with tombs and sepulchres, hewn also out of the rock, with little cavities six inches square, in which it is highly probable were inserted tablets of marble inscribed with epitaphs for the bodies which occupied them. It was here that Cicero is said to have discovered the tomb of Archimedes. We should not be surprised at its present ruined state, since at the time of the quæstorship of that orator, he was so proud of having discovered so interesting a monument, of which the Syracusans themselves even in that early age had no idea.

Through this same street it was that Timoleon passed, when in his old age he was called to

to deliberate on the important affairs of the re-publick which he had restored; and that quitting his country-house, situated in the plain, opposite to the castle of *Abdale*, he repaired in a litter to the theatre, where he found the people assembled, who, the instant he appeared, broke forth into acclamations, and before they would enter on business, obliged him to hear the recital of his illustrious deeds, as a testimonial of their never-ceasing remembrance of the services he had rendered his country. We know that the Greeks used to assemble at the theatre to treat of state affairs, as well as for theatrical exhibitions, and that they passed great part of their lives in this place of assembly.

We pursued our road by *Tycha*, an elevated quarter, of which nothing remains but a few traces of narrow, winding, and unpaved streets. The ruts of the wheels, which in some places are six inches deep in the rock, prove that these streets must have been as incommodious to carriages, as to the foot-passengers. The rock, which sometimes formed the first layer of the walls, presents us here and there with some remains of the plan of the houses, which from every ap-

pearance, were all of them very small in this quarter. They rested upon the bare rock without either foundations or substructions; accordingly no part of them is left, no, not the smallest fragment. It seems as if time had even devoured the stones; nothing is left but a naked rock, where it would be impossible to dream of looking for a city, but for the aqueducts we meet with every step. These are all subterraneous, cut out of the stone itself, and in general were calculated to convey an abundance of water, which they brought three leagues, from a country called *Bucemi*. They are reckoned to be twelve in number, and conveyed the water under ground in order to conceal it from the knowledge of an enemy, distributing it through all the quarters by canals which separated and intersected each other in every direction. Every street and every house had, generally speaking, a little narrow round well, bored like a cannon, and terminating in an aqueduct, or in a small channel which communicated with, and conveyed the water from the aqueduct. These aqueducts in many places were carried over each other, to the height of three

ranges,

ranges, yet without ever projecting above the surface of the earth.

Leaving Tycha and crossing the highest and most rugged part of Neapolis, we approached the walls that enclosed this quarter, which followed the windings of the steep face of the rock and the natural fortification. These walls, which were stronger or weaker, according as their situation required, were built of huge stones hewn in oblong squares, laid without cement and presenting a point. In some places we find as many as four layers remaining, but without enabling us to distinguish any gate. I sought in vain for that, to which Dionysius, returning by night from *Gela*, abandoned by his troops, was obliged to set fire, to obtain an entrance into the city. We saw the ruins of the famous wall built by the Athenians at the time of the siege, which cost both parties so much blood; the one to bring it near the city, and the other to demolish it. Near to this were the latomiae of Tycha, for each quarter had its quarries, which saved them the labour of conveying from too great a distance those huge stones of which their walls were built. At length, we arrived at the ruins of a castle which termi-

nated both Tycha and Neapolis, and incorporated the walls of both these quarters with the most elevated part of the city, called *Epipolæ*.

It still remains doubtful whether *Epipolæ* was really a fifth quarter, or the name only of that lofty eminence which continues and terminates in a point, at the angle where now stands the village of Belvedere; whether the enclosed space containing the castle was called *Euryalus*, or whether *Euryalus* was the castle itself; whether Abdale, the Hexopylus, and Pentapilos, were three distinct castles, or whether these were only the names of each of the three bastions composing the fortress of *Euryalus*. Be this as it may, the ruin is still sufficiently defined to give us the form of that fortress, which, if its situation was too remote to allow it to be of any great assistance to the city, at least secured the most advantageous post an enemy could take, as he would from thence discover, not only every movement that took place in all the quarters, but in the whole territory of Syracuse, in both the harbours, and out at sea. This castle at all times appeared so difficult to take, that it never was attacked. Marcellus,

bona

after

after carrying Tycha made his troops retreat, for fear of being shut in between Achradina and the garrison of this citadel, which he left behind him in the power of the enemy. At one of the bastions of Euryalus terminated the famous wall, of thirty stadia in length, inclosing Tycha and part of Achradina, built by order of Dionysius in twenty days by sixty thousand workmen, and formed of huge rocks of beautiful free-stone, which render its construction both magnificent and extraordinary. Its ruins are still visible, following, in the same manner as on the side of Neapolis, the windings of the steep face of the rock, and the natural fortification of this quarter.

Under these walls Marcellus pitched his camp, and here he entered into Tycha. Here too, may we weep, like that Roman, over Syracuse, when we reflect at this day on the fate of that city, once so vast, as to have war regularly carried on within its precincts, and to be disputed like a kingdom; at once contended for by Dionysius the younger, in the island, the Carthaginians in the harbour, Hicetas in Achradina, and Timoleon in the remainder of the city: each with a different interest, standing single against all, watching

each other; combating, entrenching, and practising every warlike manœuvre. This city, which attained to such opulence and magnificence under the reign of Hiero, as to stand without a rival, is now so ruined that we should seek for it in vain within itself, did not its determinate site, and the nature of the rock it was built on, still trace out to us its circumference.

We descended again into Neapolis, and in our return passed by the theatre where Hiero built the famous temple of a stadium in length, from which those beautiful columns which we still admire in the portal of the pantheon at Rome, are supposed to have been carried off, no part of them remaining here. Nor do we find any more remains of the harbour, which contained six hundred vessels in three hundred docks, of which we saw only the situation. In fine, after wandering several leagues without ever quitting the enclosure of the city, we returned home this day, indebted almost entirely to our imagination for all the enjoyment we had received; the discoveries we made, having contributed rather to excite regret, than to add to our stock of information.

Another

Another day we went out by the lesser harbour, or *Portus Marmoreus*, so called from the number of rich edifices and the quantity of marble lavished on it by Dionysius and Agathocles. It no longer retains any traces of that magnificence, nor even its form: it is now only a small harbour for barks, and even these enter it with difficulty at the neap tides. We still discover, however, on the left shore, some openings formed in the rock, supposed to have been the docks of the ancient gallies, which, if we judge of their size by the size of the docks in general, must have been very small.

We then entered Achradina by the part where stood the Forum, the Prytaneum, the famous palace of sixty beds, built by Agathocles, of an extraordinary size and elevation. No remains of these edifices are any longer to be seen; but they have discovered in the present century, a prodigious quantity of marbles, and large columns, which prove that by continuing researches on this side, very valuable and curious antiques might possibly still be found. As this is one of the lowest quarters, and in which the earth is most accumulated, something may have remained concealed and preserved in it, which cannot be expected where the

the rock is bare. This accordingly is the spot where they seek for and discover coins, when the earth is washed with heavy rains, and formed into ravins.

At a little distance, in a vineyard called *Vianisi*, we find the substructions of a large edifice, with arches of a very singular kind. A sort of phials, eight inches long by three in width, without bottoms, and filled with mortar, have their necks inserted into each other in a row, covered over again with a general coat of plaster, on which a brick was laid flat, then a fresh bed of mortar, and another brick upon that, like the former. It was scarcely possible ever to destroy semicircular arches fabricated in this manner, and it is with the utmost difficulty you can wrench off a few fragments. These arches are enclosed in others of free-stone, of the same construction as is employed at present. Why then this extraordinary contrivance, when they possessed so simple a method? Perhaps they dreaded the thrust of our arched roofs, and preferred this sort of callotte of a single piece, the bearing of which was perpendicular. It is difficult to form any opinion concerning the plan of this edifice from its remains.

You

You only perceive that the construction has been resumed at different times, and that the plan and distribution were changed and enlarged.

From these ruins we passed to St. *Lucia*, the place where that saint, the patroness of Syracuse, suffered martyrdom and was buried. Behind the great altar, they preserve the shadow of a large painting of Caravaggio, damaged, as they say, by the last earthquake, and of which hardly any thing is remaining but the canvas. On the altar of the private chapel of the saint, is her figure in marble, executed in a graceful style. By the side of this chapel, are some catacombs which have nothing worthy of remark.

We next went to the convent of the Capuchins, whose garden, planted in the latomiæ, produces a most solemn and picturesque effect. It is a winding gallery without any plan, in which tufts of lemon and orange trees, either scattered or in shaded walks, are planted between steep rocks, or under vaulted roofs, which, worn by time, at this day have all the appearance of hanging rocks. This contrast of the graceful and the terrible is equally susceptible of both styles. Young and

and Anacreon would each here have found the scene and colouring suitable to his genius. With respect to the inhabitants of so extraordinary a garden, they content themselves with counting their oranges day by day, and reckoning how much they will produce, without so much as thinking of lifting up their eyes to see whether the suspended mass menaces their heads, or of inhaling the delicious odour of the orange flower.

I here found another Ear of Dionysius, which, from its being not so well executed, or perhaps demolished by subsequent excavations, has acquired no celebrity. I observed the same notches or rings in the walls, which might after all, have served only to fasten the animals to, that drew the stones up from the quarries.

From these latomiæ we proceeded to the famous catacombs of St. John, the handsomest, the most spacious, and best preserved of any I ever saw, and perhaps the best calculated to give us accurate ideas of places of this nature. These form an entire city, with its larger and smaller streets, its squares and cross-ways, dug out of the rock, in several stories, and evidently for the purposes of burial,

rial, and not quarries like the others. These caverns never could have been made use of to procure stone, the avenues being neither sufficiently wide nor commodious, and the whole space being contrived with flat or spherical roofs. These catacombs have evidently been executed with attention, during a long series of ages, by a rich and numerous people, able to employ a great number of slaves and workmen to complete them.

We first visited a church, esteemed the earliest erected for Christian worship, and said to have been built in the time of St. *Marcian*. It is to be presumed however, that in that early age there were no regular churches, and that the Christian altars were not then covered by such splendid edifices. This building, which is decorated with ruins, is in the Greek form with three altars ; on the right we see the first episcopal seat, formed out of an Ionick capital, and by the side of it the tomb of St. Marcian, of genuine apostolick simplicity. On the other side is a mutilated column of granite, revered for having been used to bind several saints, at the time they received the crown of martyrdom. In the walls of this church we find several Greek inscriptions of

the

the lower empire, which proves it not to be so ancient as is pretended.

Descending under a vault on the side, we discovered the archway of the ancient gate leading to the catacombs. We first entered the main street, which is wide, straight, and flat roofed, and may be followed a long way, but without any possibility of discovering its positive length, on account of the accumulations of earth formed in it. On the left, at entering, we saw the mouth of a passage interrupted by an aqueduct, apparently still more ancient than the catacombs, and which they had met with in digging. Farther on, we found against the roof of the same passage, the continuation of this aqueduct. On each side of this street are large sepulchres incrusted in the rock, arched over; and other lesser monuments for the interment of children. At regular intervals are other deep excavations in a straight line, containing from thirty to sixty tombs, by the side of each other, of the same size, all formed out of the solid rock, and which have all been carefully opened and searched. In other places are private sepulchral chambers, with doors that locked, the notches for the hinges and staples being still visible, and where some

larger

larger and wider tombs stand detached in the middle ; the burying-places, doubtless, of the chiefs of families. Next come the cross-ways, or meeting of two streets, which form four avenues, leading into immense round saloons, with a cylindrical roof skilfully wrought, having an aperture in it reaching to the surface of the earth, for the admission of air and light. Around these halls are tombs, regularly placed, and of the same form with those of the principal street.

While wandering through this gloomy labyrinth, we are astonished to find ourselves returned to the same spot without perceiving it, and to have got into the story below that which we have just quitted. It is impossible, that a work so expensive, and which must have been so long in completing, could have been executed but by the Greeks ; for during the Roman government, and since that period, Syracuse has never been a city sufficiently considerable to form these excavations, had all the inhabitants done nothing else but dig. Besides, that this equality and simplicity in the honours rendered to the dead, announce a period of liberty and a republican government. And if some few distinctions are discoverable, it is evident that their introduction is of a posterior

posterior date. These distinctions consist in some Greek paintings of the lower empire, executed on a stucco laid over the rock, with Greek or Latin characters ; the symbols of martyrdom, such as palms, doves, circles in which crosses and letters were inscribed ; and the marks of C. P. A. or P. C. (*pro Christo*) the ordinary tokens of the tombs of martyrs, but which were not placed there till long after the period when the caverns were made use of, and on their being abandoned to the poor Christians, who probably here concealed themselves in the time of persecution, and added these pitiful ornaments in order to distinguish their saints from the idolaters, whom they had dislodged. We know likewise, that the Catholicks were never very scrupulous about this sort of robbery : marble inscriptions found in several places, the tablet of which they had turned and engraved on it other names, prove the truth of what I advance. If we wish for a more remarkable example, we have but to go to Rome, where we shall find Pope Corsini in the tomb of Agrippa.

But to return to the catacombs ; they have nothing of the awful and terrifick air of those at Naples, but that of a mild and noble tranquility,

tranquillity, announcing the sanctuary of repose. On the whole, I am of opinion, that of all the monuments of Syracuse still subsisting, these may justly be esteemed the best calculated to give us an adequate idea of the ancient grandeur of that city.

Leaving the catacombs, we saw the ruins of the church of an ancient Benedictine convent, founded by Pope Gregory the Great, among which we found some fragments of antique Doric columns fluted, which had been employed in the building and decoration of this ancient church.

From hence we proceeded to the sea-shore, following a deep valley, perhaps in ancient times a low street leading to the sea. It is evident that there has been a gate with steps ; it was called the gate of Achradina. Opposite to this place are two shoals, now named the Two Brothers. I took a boat and made the tour of them, without discovering any vestiges of buildings, or workmanship in the rock. Farther on we found another hollow way, called *Buon Servizzio*, which may lead us to suppose that here was the house of Archimedes. This geometrician, whose sublime inventions have reached even to our times,

contrived his machines under the pacifick reign of his relation Hiero, and afterwards employed them against the Romans. He threw them into confusion with his arrows, dashed their gallies to pieces, and finally so intimidated the besiegers by the varied novelty of his inventions, as to make them fly the instant they saw a few pieces of timber appear upon the walls. Marcellus stiled him, “That “Briareus of geometry, who surpasses all that “has been related to us of the giants.” And in fact, the Syracusans were no more than instruments employed by this great artist to work his machines, and for the first time war was carried on under cover, and men learned to combat without exposing themselves to the danger of being injured by the enemy. One aged man resisted for eight months the Roman forces; so true it is that a single man may constitute both the strength and glory of a whole nation. The power and fame of the Bœotians was born and expired with Epaminondas.

There exists nothing of the house of Archimedes, any more than of the palace of Gelo, and of the grand and famous temple of Æsculapius, which we know once stood in Achradina.

dina. All this quarter is so ruined, that the rock itself which served as their foundation, is corroded by time, and looks more like scoriae than stone. I did not discover a single detached stone, so completely are the ruins dissipated and dissolved; yet there are still some fragments of *mattoni* and broken vases, preserving their original forms and angles, this substance resisting time better than stone, or even glass. By comparing the ruins of Syracuse with those of the temple of the Lacinian Juno at Crotona, and the temples of Metapontum, Selinus, and Agrigentum, all more ancient than these, we clearly perceive that the friable coarse stone, which is rather a marine concretion than a rock-stone, succeeds better in resisting time, and in retaining its form, than the fine stone that constitutes the foil of Syracuse.

That part of Achradina which faced the east, descended with a gentle declivity to the sea, and must doubtless have been the most commodious; but it enjoyed the least varied and least pleasing view, as nothing was to be discovered from it but the open sea. Returning to the north part of it, we found some vestiges of the walls of the ancient boundary,

which were built on a rock beaten by the sea, and rendered the city exceedingly strong on that side. The further we advanced along the port of *Trogilus*, the more visible did the walls become ; and when we had passed *la Tonnara*, called *Santa-Buonacia*, a spot where the sea retreating towards the city, forms a small, but narrow and deep bay, we again fell in with the famous walls built by *Dionysius*, which we followed, and could perfectly distinguish, constructed in layers of two stones in width, and two in length. At the bottom of the harbour of *Trogilus*, a port always exposed to the fleets of the enemies of *Syracuse*, and in which that of *Marcellus* lay, we saw the shore, where, during the exchange of prisoners, some Roman soldiers approaching the walls, took that opportunity of measuring the height, by counting the layers of stone ; which occasioned the first surprise of the quarter of *Tycha*. We perceived, at a distance likewise, the territory granted to the Spaniard *Mericus*, the traitor, who delivered up the quarter of *Achradina* to *Marcellus*, and occasioned the capture of *Syracuse*. This district, called by historians *Belligeni*, is still known by the name of *Bigeni*.

From

From hence we returned, crossing the ancient city in its greatest width, but had no better fortune in meeting with antiquities. The centre, less barren than other parts, is planted with vines and olives, and contains some scattered dwellings, but these are few. As we advanced, we discovered some traces of streets, but still narrow and winding, and a fragment of a subterraneous canal, which from its form and size I take to be a sewer, rather than an aqueduct, and the more so, as some others pass close by it. As we approached the theatre, at the meeting of a cross-way, we found a rock in which were hewn two tombs with fronts, consisting of two antique Dorick columns, fluted and without bases, a gate and pediment. In the inside were sarcophagi and niches for cinerary urns. These two tombs which are highly picturesque, and in a style that evinces their antiquity, prove that if it was the custom in many Grecian cities to place them without the walls, that custom was not general; since these were within the second quarter of Syracuse, as well as the catacombs, and since the tomb of Dionysius was erected in Ortygia, that of Thrasybulus in Tycha, and those of Hiero

and Archimedes in Neapolis, after these quarters were encompassed with walls.

This variety in the burial places may lead us to imagine that the Romans took possession of the habitations of the Greeks, even to their last abodes: or were the Greeks likewise acquainted with the practice of burning bodies?

From hence we returned to the place from which we had set out; and calculating the time it had taken us to run over this quarter, I was confirmed in the idea which I had conceived at the first sight of Syracuse, that it was about the size of modern Paris.

Another day, we hired a little long and narrow bark, and traversing the grand harbour, entered the celebrated river *Anapus*, which is no more than a gentle rivulet four and twenty feet wide, and twelve or fifteen in depth at the mouth. We quitted our boat for a moment, at the bridge over it, to view the ruins of the famous temple of Jupiter Olympius, two columns of which are all that is now remaining; the one the column of the left angle of the eastern side, and the other, that of the corresponding angle of the western front. The estate they stand on belongs to

the

the monastery of Santa Maria, and is now called *The columns*. In the time of Cluverius there were seven, and the fragments of some that were overthrown, were to be seen but a few years since; the two remaining ones are tottering. There are no capitals, and the fluting does not descend quite to the bottom, but leaves a small socle of seven inches.

This temple was built on an eminence, between two morasses, and formerly composed a little detached quarter. This temple was seized on by the fierce Himilco, who after nearly conquering all Sicily, came to lay siege to Syracuse, entered the port, followed by a thousand vessels, and three hundred thousand soldiers, pillaged the temple of Ceres and Proserpine, under the walls of Neapolis, and took up his quarters in that of Jupiter. He demolished all the tombs in the environs to fortify himself, and amongst others, those of Gelo and Demaratus, of which no traces now remain. The situation is highly favourable for a camp, and for rendering it impregnable; but the adjoining marshes produce a perpetually unwholesome air, which more than once saved Syracuse, by spreading dreadful diseases among the Athenian army, and

introducing the plague into the camp of the Carthaginians. On this occasion, that terrible distemper raged with such fury, as to drive those who were seized with it raving mad. It was impossible to assist the sick, and as history informs us, the patient being without succour, and the disorder without remedy, the dead were left unburied. The terror of such a spectacle, the general consternation and despair, still aggravated the evil. The proud Himilco, therefore, who, after ravaging Sicily, was come as if in triumph, to lay siege to Syracuse, soon found himself reduced to supplicate and purchase the pity of Dionysius, with three hundred talents. Abandoning his allies, and leaving one hundred and fifty thousand dead bodies unburied, he fled under cover of the night, and pursued by fear, to Carthage, where he would have been fortunate never to have landed. The view of the scenes of such events, and the images they presented to my imagination, made me still shudder even after the lapse of so many ages.

We returned to our boat, and the scene changed; these grand and mournful objects vanished, and were succeeded by gayer prospects.

spects. The banks of the river presently became narrower, and we found ourselves overshadowed by canes and reeds, and as it were in the midst of a thick coppice. The water continually became clearer, and at length displayed the transparency of crystal. It was so deep that we could not observe the current. We soon arrived at the spot where the fountain of Cyane forms a junction with the Anapus. We abandoned the river for the fountain, which, once a companion of Proserpine, was thus metamorphosed for having attempted to oppose the rape of that princess. Still retaining her virgin modesty, it is only possible to discover the nymph, by lifting up the reeds that cover her.

We soon met with the *papyrus*, that celebrated and curious plant which exists in no part of the world, but in the marshes formed by the inundations of the Nile, and near this tranquil fountain. I was extremely anxious to see, handle, and make myself acquainted with the mode of growth of this vegetable, then in its greatest beauty. This plant, almost a wanderer on the waters, is not attached either to the side or bottom by its roots, which are small

and

and delicate, and suck up the water they distribute to the stem, like the flowers we produce in winter, in glasses on our chimney-pieces. It increases by new roots after the manner of bulbous roots. Its bulb is of the shape and colour of our tulip roots, with similar integuments. From each shoot springs a single triangular, and not rectilinear blade, with two straight sides and a curve, without foliage, and of a bright green; at the bottom of the shoot a triangular and cubick bud first makes its appearance, with an integument perfectly resembling the petal of our tulips. This flower unfolds itself in time. A verdant tuft formed of slight filaments, of the size of a common thread, grows and subdivides itself with the growth of the stalk, till at length there appears on the point of this fringe, a green, but almost imperceptible flower, which announces the perfection of the plant. Its whole heighth is from five to ten feet. The crest with which this straight and fine drawn stem is majestically crowned, has fibres of fifteen inches long, and produces a very agreeable effect. This species of bulrush, which at first sight appears to have some solidity, has only a smooth and firm rind, composed of threads covering a spungy pith, which

which droops and dies when it ceases to imbibe the water. The death of each blade involves that of the bulb, and the roots attached to it. The decomposition of all this serves for the nutriment of fresh shoots, and ligaments at their stock, which in the end produce little islands continually increasing, that would wholly conceal the fountain, were its passage not occasionally cleared out. This plant, as described by Pliny, in his account of that which grows on the banks of the Nile, is still called by the peasants of this country, *pampera*, with the same pronunciation as the word *παμπέρα* is spoken. It is only made use of to bind the corn, in time of harvest. It will only flourish where it finds all the united advantages to be met with here: a warm climate, and fine tranquil and deep water, in which its roots are undisturbed by any current. This so celebrated plant, which occupies in Europe but a single mile along this fountain, seems to exist only as a curiosity; a circumstance that might tempt us, in my opinion, to adopt the idea of its having been originally brought from Egypt, or sent by Ptolemy to Hiero, who is known to have carried on a considerable commerce, and to have lived in great intimacy with that prince.

After

After passing the *Papyri*, we found ourselves in the midst of a meadow, through which we seemed to sail; for the fountain was still hid under other plants and flowers, and the bottom of the meadow was very far from solid. At length, we arrived at its source, which is a large basin so perfectly limpid, as to permit us to discern the smallest fish at thirty feet deep. These fishes, formerly held sacred from the worship bestowed upon the nymph, are still protected at this day by the depth and transparency of the water. We pitched a tent by the side of the fountain, which, notwithstanding its enormous volume of water, forms no ebullition, nor is its crystal disturbed by a single bubble of air. We made an agreeable halt under the shade, and drank some excellent *calabrese*^{*}, on the borders of this delightful spring, to which we had vowed the most respectful admiration. We then joyously resumed our voyage, not quite in so speculative a mood as in the morning, and returned at night to Syracuse, after having employed almost the whole day in a serpentine navigation of fourteen miles through a delicious country.

* A Sicilian wine.

T O U R
TO
I P S I C A.

EVERY body talked to me of the caves of *Ipsica*, yet nobody could say that they had seen them ; and though I had been frequently deceived with respect to grottos, I know not what inspiration tempted my curiosity. The apprehension of future regret at losing the opportunity, induced me suddenly to set out one morning with my companions. We crossed the plain of Syracuse, which now produces a great deal of wine, and is planted with olive trees, coeval with the ancient city. We then came into a stony

a stony country, which continues till you approach the river *Casibile*, that flows through, and fertilizes a little valley. At some distance from the sea, and on an eminence, where an inconsiderable farm stands, they discovered a few years ago the ruins of an antique villa; and digging further, found an entire marble statue, and an handsome bust, which were sent by Count Gaetano to the king of Naples. Continuing their researches, they found likewise a hot-bath lined with marble; when, as if afraid of further discoveries, the whole was instantly covered up, so as to leave no traces of the excavation, which might have been highly interesting, by making us acquainted with the Grecian taste, in the plan of their country houses, and their magnificence in this particular.

I ran over the whole neighbourhood in search of the *Via Helorina*, but without finding it. Three miles further on, we discovered on the sea shore some large fields covered with a fresh and delicate verdure; these were the sugar plantations of the Prince of *Monte Leone*, who alone, from a spirit of magnificence, continues to cultivate this production in Sicily, where it was known and encouraged

raged in the most remote antiquity, and where it continued to flourish until the soil of America was found to be so peculiarly adapted to the sugar cane, as to put an end to its culture in every other part of the world. The plant is slender, and only rises to the height of seven feet. It grows in separate tufts, the leaf resembling that of a reed, and the stem that of the ordinary cane. The intervals between the joints increase, in proportion as the stalk rises from the earth. Each knot has a productive eyelet, and the root must be constantly watered, like rice. In cultivating it, the earth is trenched about the root, which makes the plant throw out clusters, develop the buds of the first joints, and produce blades. It begins to shoot in February, and is not gathered till December, towards Christmas, when the cane is cut down within four inches of the ground. To multiply the plant, young sprigs are detached from the tuft, and set in the earth without root, like a piece of wood. Though these canes were not at their maturity, we chewed them with pleasure. The upper part has an acid taste, little resembling the real nature of the plant: this they cut, and give to the cattle,

cattle, who are very fond of it. All the part near the earth is stringy, and has scarcely any taste. The stalk of the cane contains, within a pithy substance, that luscious and glutinous fluid, of an agreeable flavour, which is formed into sugar by the process of grinding, boiling, and depuration. The sugar-house here was deserted, and we could not find any body to open the works for us.

From hence we proceeded to Avola, only a mile further, and sixteen from Syracuse. This city, which stood formerly on a hill, boasted of being the *Hybla major*, so celebrated for its honey ; but so many towns lay claim to the ancient title of *Hybla*, or there were really so many cities of that name, that it is impossible to decide any thing on the subject. I have myself met with three ; this we are speaking of, *Hybla Megara* near *Mellili*, and *Paterno*, in the vicinity of *Etna*. Avola having been destroyed by the earthquake of 1693, the inhabitants rebuilt it more commodiously in the plain, in a fruitful territory, luxuriant in corn and fruits, and principally in almonds, a considerable article of commerce. The houses still prove, by being extremely

tremely low, the dread entertained of earthquakes ; the streets are wide and regular.

After dining we set out for *Noto*, only six miles from *Avola*, situated in a rich and well wooded country. The ancient *Noto*, the capital of the district of that name, was built six miles from the modern town, on the summit of a barren hill, which renders it difficult of access, and its situation disagreeable. Not one stone of it being left upon another, after the same earthquake that destroyed *Catania*, *Lentini*, and *Avola*, the inhabitants, like those of *Avola*, immediately transferred their dwellings to the spot where they now stand. The city was laid out on a flat high ground; and as if it were only intended to accommodate a people consisting of priests and nuns, their sole object seems to have been to erect churches and convents, which are so spacious and so numerous, that there seems to be nothing else. From another singularity, the rich individuals among the inhabitants have quitted the natural site of the city, which is in a good air, and built their houses on an awkward inclined plain, extremely inconvenient, and where the air is very far from salubrious. We cannot but regret here, as at *Catania*, that so considerable

an expense, and such magnificent materials as those we find at Noto, should have been employed with so little taste; and that a perfectly new city should, to the disgrace of the arts, be so built, in an age, when such efforts seem to be making to study and imitate the excellent models of a simple, noble, and well contrived architecture.

On the recommendation of the Bishop of Syracuse, we were received by his Grand Vicar *Don Pascale Zapata*, who gave us all the information in his power respecting *Ispica*. His assistance, however, extended no farther than the addition of a *Campieri* to one we had, who conducted us next day to *Rosolini*, a village fourteen miles distant. The notary of the place, to whom we were recommended, here gave us an additional guide to our two *Campieris*, who had orders to take another, whom in fact we found in our road, and who conducted us six miles farther, through a vast, rugged, and uncultivated desert, where we could discover nothing but a few scattered carob beans.

I S P I C A.

In the middle of this extensive space, which has the appearance of a level plain, the ground suddenly descending, displays a hollow winding vale, as rich and luxuriant in productions, as the rest of the country is dry and barren. We descended by a dangerous path along the perpendicular rock that skirts this valley, the bottom of which is one hundred feet below the level we had quitted. At the foot of the declivity is a copious fountain watering large trees, and flowing through channels hewn out of the rock; which bestows on this spot, situated in the ruggedest and hottest part of the south of Sicily, all the verdure and coolness of the summer prospects in the Alps.

I was enjoying the pleasures of this valley, and casting my eyes around to see every thing curious which it contained, when on examining more closely the side of that part of it which faces the south, the part most decayed by the effects of the sun and air, I perceived a prodigious multitude of little chambers, indented in the rock, in stories of ten or twelve feet, piled over each other. For a moment,

I was in doubt whether this might not be a natural effect on the rock itself, which had been thus honey-combed by time, from the greater or lesser degree of solidity of the strata: this idea, however, I soon abandoned, on discovering, on a closer inspection, the impression of the tool, on a stone of an equal hardness, and on finding that there were as many doors as chambers, which were all of the same size, and almost all of them without any communication, of the same form, the same workmanship, the same distributions, and evidently designed for the same purpose. We examined the opposite side, and on a closer view remarked, that it had been less worked and inhabited, but that from its being more in the shade, it was not so much wasted, and that no part of the grottos was discoverable, except the narrow apertures that served by way of entrance, which were, in general, concealed by the obliquity of their direction. On this side we found intire chambers, the door-ways preserved, and a groove on each side of the jambs, apparently for the inhabitants to apply sliding planks, one above the other, and two holes for a cross-bar to secure the fastening. Each

apartment

apartment forms a square with obtuse angles, eighteen feet long, by six wide, and as many in height. Opposite the entrance of those of the first story, is a sort of niches with something like a manger in them, and an indented ring for the purpose of fastening their cows. To the left of each door, is a kind of bathing hole or bason, cut out of the rock, with an external aperture, which seems intended to let the water escape; and another opening breast high, for the admission of light and air, when the door was shut: opposite to this was a recess of a few inches, where we may suppose they slept, and all around the side walls, are notches for the purpose of tying up the goats, or suspending their utensils, and holes doubtless for pegs to support the planks, which served by way of shelves. There are little excavations likewise of a few inches, to contain lamps or other small furniture; and in certain places a sort of buffet in which were incrusted a few pots, and below, a little circular platform, with a small gutter round it to let off the water: but all this so effaced, and originally so ill executed, as to render it impossible to divine the use of them, unless it were for making and containing cheeses.

These dwellings had no communication, although in general, separated only by a solid wall of six inches, and the upper story had only a thicker flooring. The little paths which led to the doors of the lower row, were oblique and hidden, and it is indisputable that no body could mount to, or descend from the upper stories, but by rope ladders. I examined this valley the length of three miles, and in all that way constantly found the same excavations, in the same order, and similarly circumstanced. Some of them, however, had a second chamber, behind the first, and others which communicated with the upper row by a round aperture, like a well, and holes that served doubtless for placing temporary ladders instead of stair-cases. I examined every thing within my reach, and wherever I could scramble, without finding any difference. Not a single straight line was there, nor a right angle, nor an arched roof, nor a plane surface. In these rustic abodes, I was filled with astonishment at meeting with fragments of Greek vases; of the greatest delicacy; and in the bottom of the valley, tombs formed out of a hollow stone, five feet and some inches long, by fifteen inches wide, and containing

taining petrified bones; a great quantity of fragments of vases of a coarse red earth; a piece of white marble rudely hewn in the form of a little pedestal for a bust; two little square openings, and a sort of oven, four feet in diameter, by four feet two inches in height, with a cylindrical roof, the only thing that could be said to have any regularity in its shape.

I found some of these retreats still inhabited, every thing put to the same use, and the manners and disposition of the inhabitants as savage, as the place was wild and solitary. The children made their escape at my appearance, and cried with the utmost violence on seeing me enter their father's cabin, in spite of all the signs of friendship I could devise, to inspire them with some confidence. Following this valley, we arrived at what is called *The Castle*, which is excavated in the same manner in the rock. The ascent to the second story is by a stair-case on the outside, the only one to be found in the valley. All the first apartments have been laid open by the fall of the rock. We may reckon eight of them in this situation, of which only the bottom is visible; the fourth

must have been made use of as a kitchen. All the marks of the fire made in it are still discoverable, and a sort of little furnace, before which are mortars hollowed out of the rock. In the eighth chamber, is a round aperture which serves as a stair-case; beyond that, are two small close rooms in the form of slips, the one eight feet long, the other seven; then an apartment of twenty-four feet by nine, with a window; and three others in a row, and on a level, communicating with each other; two more in a second row, still deeper in the rock, communicating with those which were parallel with them; in the last but one, a hole descending to the story below it, and another, communicating with that above. To the latter we were unable to get up, but their distribution was apparently the same,

It would be by no means difficult, if we thought proper, to bestow names upon each of these apartments, by calling them chambers, and antichambers, sleeping rooms, alcove chambers, cabinets, and audience chambers; but as there is no more refinement in them, than in the ordinary ones, and as all the difference consists in the communication between the ground floor and the upper and

and lower stories, the most reasonable conjecture we can form of this castle is, that, from its form and position, it has been the residence of the chief of the tribe, a tribe which must have been prodigiously numerous if we estimate it by the number of huts or lodges found in a valley of eight miles extent, beginning at *Spaco Furno*, and terminating near *Modica*. I again advanced a mile further into the valley without finding any change in the construction of these retreats, either with respect to their regularity, or number. As not one of them is the effect of chance, but all are the work of men little removed from a state of nature, it is impossible to avoid believing them to be of the very highest antiquity, and formed perhaps by the first inhabitants of the island, before they were acquainted with the commodiousness of houses, or laboured for any thing more than to procure themselves a shelter from the inclemencies of the weather. The astonishing number of these lodgements leave not a shadow of doubt of their having been occupied by a very numerous people, absolutely in the pastoral state, without defence, and employing as their greatest effort, and most artful stratagem of war,

that

that of concealment, by forming intrenchments, and burying themselves, as I may say, in the rock. History gives us for the first inhabitants of Sicily, the Læstrygons, a gigantick race of men, whose origin is unknown, and the Siconians, who came from Spain. It informs us, that these people perpetually contesting with each other the plains of Leontium, and the fertile countries about Ætna, the Siconians were at length obliged to give way to the Læstrygons, who drove them off, and compelled them to retire and occupy the southern part. May it not have been to the valley of Ispica, which is on the southern side, that the Siconians retreated to conceal themselves in the desart, and escape the pursuit of their gigantick enemies? But this was long before the time of Cocalus, and the period in which cities were built in the island. It is the nature of man to imitate what he has seen, and to endeavour to procure what he has already been accustomed to enjoy. Were Europeans exiled into a desart, they would build a town, and frame houses more or less numerous similar to those in which they were born; but they would never long continue to inhabit the den of a savage.

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Had the inhabitants of these retreats ever beheld a town of any sort, they would have entertained some idea of straight lines, of angles, and of regular forms, and have sought to avail themselves, in these excavations, of the advantages arising from those forms. We may venture therefore, to carry back the epocha in which this valley began to be inhabited, to the most remote antiquity, and to the period, when the island was inhabited only by pastoral tribes, or by a subjugated and defenceless people, reduced to hide themselves in order to escape the persecution of a savage and barbarous conqueror. And this being allowed, the little Grecian vases found in the tombs, the marble pedestal, and the kind of regularly cut ovens I have mentioned, would form separate and interesting objects of inquiry.

These retreats then, at first inhabited by a whole people, might have been gradually abandoned in order to build Trinacria, Cafmena, Argyra, Enna, Camicus, and other cities in the centre of the island, and on the brows of rocks; such as those we know were founded by the Siconians, in which they defended themselves against the Læstrygons, and even

even against the Greeks, who occupied the coasts. The Greeks had frequent wars with this people, whom they had reduced, but never were able entirely to subdue; a circumstance tending to prove, that the Greek colonies in Sicily, like the present European settlements in America and Asia, bestowed their attention on the riches to be acquired by commerce, rather than on the extension of dominion.

These early habitations, thus left vacant, may at different periods successively have served as temporary places of retreat to vanquished troops, who found there a secret asylum from pursuit, either in the more early ages, at the time when the Greeks invaded the island, or even at the period when the Romans were obliged to send for several succeeding years, great armies into Sicily, against the revolted slaves; who, after losing all the towns which they had prevailed on to favour their insurrection, still continued to keep the field, alternately disappearing and presenting themselves at the moment they were thought to have been destroyed. No situation could be better calculated to procure them such resources, than

these

these obscure retreats ; nor have they ceased to be inhabited even in our days. They still continue to afford dwellings to some shepherds, who, without making any change in their original form, apply them to the same uses, and are as wild as their pristine possessors, living on milk, fruits, and cabbages, which they cultivate in the bottom of the valley, fastening their cows and goats to the same rings, in the same situations, sleeping in the same places, and exhibiting the same terror at the sight of a man with a coat on, as the earliest inhabitants may be supposed to have expressed, at the appearance of a human being with any dress or ornaments, to which they were then strangers. Those of the present day, when they accidentally see travellers, look upon them as magicians come in search of treasures. Our guides, consequently, never quitted our draftsmen, whose drawings appeared to these good people, to be some operation of necromancy.

I had gone a little forward, and straying amongst these savage and solitary abodes, fell insensibly into a reverie. My imagination transported me to the times, in which this valley

valley was inhabited by those simple men, who lived on the milk of their flocks, and clothed themselves with their skins. I beheld them occupied with the care of milking their goats, and driving and shutting up their herds in these holes, mounting to the upper stories, carrying with them their children, or the kids they did not choose to leave with their mothers. I saw them, seated on the grass, enjoying their humble repasts, by the side of these beauteous fountains, without suspecting other wants than what nature amply gratified, or desiring other enjoyments than those the earth presented to their eyes, and produced under their hands: Then, passing from the picture of man, thus coming out of the hands of nature, to his present state in the midst of our great capitals, having attained the art of producing looking-glasses and tapestry, yet ignorant what bread is made of, and of the method of forming planks; and pursuing the transition from these wild habitations to the dressing-rooms of our Parisian belles, I could not but admire the immense distance which manners and society display to the human imagination, and the infinite time requisite to produce each shade,

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to create a want in seeking an enjoyment, and, by degrees, forming a superfluity into a necessity, no longer to be able to find what we esteem necessaries, even in the assemblage of the productions of the whole earth.

Indulging in these reflections, I perceived neither the road I was following, nor the decline of the sun, but had got to a distance from my companions, and was obliged to hurry back to join them. I was extremely heated when I got on horseback; the cold struck me at the most unwholesome moment of the day, in a region of bad air, and I arrived at Rosalini with an intolerable head-ach. Not one of us could get a wink of sleep.

RETURN TO SYRACUSE.

I mounted my horse with a fever, and a pain in my bones, as if I had the gout. We travelled along the sea coast, and descended into the rich valley, through which flows the river *Helorum*, which watering it in summer, and overflowing it in winter, makes it one of the most fertile vales in Sicily. I here again discovered the usual fidelity of the geographical descriptions of Virgil. We crossed the river,

river, and found four feet water after a drought of five months.

We ascended a rising ground, between Helorum and *Arinerus*, where, after three days march, and being three times defeated, the Athenians were made prisoners by the Syracusans ; where the Athenian army, exhausted with fatigue and thirst, was stopped in its progress by the marshes ; and where the unhappy Nicias, learning the defeat of Demosthenes, surrendered his buckler to Gylippus. We found an obelisk, partly demolished, which is thought to have been a trophy erected in commemoration of this celebrated victory. This trophy, erected in the most conspicuous situation, is a square pedestal of about fifteen feet wide and seven high, supporting a kind of column without base or fluting, composed of four stones in each layer, and is still standing to the height of forty or five and forty feet, but whose summit is destroyed by time and earthquakes, that have displaced the layers, which are without cement.

I imagined to myself the unfortunate Nicias, the general entrusted with the greatest military expedition ever undertaken by the Athenians,

Athenians, and who was on the point of seeing his reputation crowned by the most celebrated of victories : I beheld him, overwhelmed with misfortunes and with years, with his hoary head bowed down, and on his knees, devoting himself to the disgrace of slavery, to save the lives of his few remaining soldiers, embracing the knees of the victor, and delivering him his buckler.

We know the value the Syracusans annexed to this testimonial of their victory ; in proof of which, they erected an obelisk at Syracuse, whereon they placed this buckler. We know too, that they instantly formed trophies on the spot, by fastening the arms of the vanquished to the trees ; that they afterwards erected a triumphal column, probably that which is still remaining ; and that they at length returned in triumph to their delivered city, crowned with flowers, with which they had decorated even their horses. The day of this memorable victory was delivered down to posterity by festivals which were regularly celebrated from age to age, until their origin and motive were utterly forgotten. Not a century has elapsed since the citizens, on the 10th of May, conveyed into the great square,

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and raised there, an enormous tree, which they accompanied with branches of palm in their hands. This ceremony has been laid aside, but a singular custom is still suffered to exist. On this same 10th of May, every citizen arrested for debt becomes free, on condition of his returning into custody at the expiration of a month, if in that interval he is unable to settle his affairs. And this is a day of general rejoicing at Syracuse, without any person being able to assign the reason. It would be singular enough should this likewise be in commemoration of the defeat of Nicias.

At the foot of this column, I found myself no less oppressed and desponding than the aged general. I lay stretched out on the ground, unable to rise, whilst our draughtsmen were taking views of the country, in order to describe this historical subject. We were to have returned to Noto, but the apprehension of an illness in a strange house, made me resolve to get back to Syracuse, where the treatment I had received from M. Alagonia, the Bishop, made me imagine myself at home; but we had thirty miles to travel. We passed the *Asinaro*, and baited our horses at *Avola*. My head continued visibly

to

to swell, and I threw myself on a bench, from which they were obliged to lift me on horseback. I now had a second fit of the ague, and was no longer able to support myself; the miles appeared to me endless, and I thought we never should reach Syracuse; to which place, however, at the time of shutting the gates, my horse brought me, totally disfigured and exhausted. On getting into bed, I had a violent shivering; but it was perhaps the very violence of this fit that freed me from every dangerous symptom; for three days after I was out of bed, and on horseback pursuing my journey.

The Grand Vicar, of the house of Gargallo, the same who had assisted us during our quarantine, was so good as to accompany us to the confines of the territory of Syracuse. We went out by the gate of *Trogilus*, and traversing all the bottom of that harbour, found, opposite the peninsula of *Tapsus*, now called *degli Magnisi*, a monument, said to have been erected in memory of the victory of Marcellus.

Though this monument be decayed by time, and stones are daily carried off from it, we still distinguish the pedestal terminated by a cymatium or gola, and a cornice; above is a small

socle, or finishing, which served as the basis of a column: a few feet of the shaft are all the remains of this column, in other respects so wasted, that it must be approached very near to discover its circular form. As there is no tradition concerning this monument, and as the camp of Marcellus during the siege of Syracuse was actually on this spot, no well founded objection can be alleged against the conjecture that it was a trophy erected in honour of that hero. Its construction is solid, in layers, and without cement.

From hence we went to dine at the manor of *Preodo*, where our worthy Grand Vicar gave us a taste of all the wines of Syracuse from his cellar, and explained to us the mode of diversifying them in their preparation.

Three vintages are procured from the same vineyard, by gathering the ripest grapes, from week to week. The second is in the highest estimation. They make a wine likewise without either working it in the tub, or pressing the grapes; this latter is very light: they next produce a different quality by pressure. They have another method too of suffering the grapes to wither in the sun before they press them; which makes a sort of dry wine, greatly resembling

bling *Cape* white wine. After this, mixing the old wine with the new of different qualities, the varieties they form are infinite; but the only two sorts which are really distinct, are the fermented red wine called calabrese, and the white muscado. A proof of the excellence of these wines is, that you may leave them in the cask, half, or quarter empty, as in a bottle, without injuring or altering their quality.

The plant in the vineyard, resembles our *gamé*, and is cut in the same way; that is to say, it is a sucker shooting from the earth to about six inches and forming a small head, from which they every year preserve a quantity of slips, which they cut, leaving only a bud or two on each; and this cutting is performed in January before the rising of the sap.

MELLILLI

We pursued our journey under *Melilli*, built on Mount *Hybla*, famous for the excellency of its honey; but after eating that which is at present produced there, I own it did not appear to me so good as that of Malta, nor better than our honey of Narbonne. I imagine this alteration in its quality must arise from the little attention bestowed by the inhabitants on its pre-

paration; yet they are careful of the bees, carry them to the mountain in summer, and bring them back into the plain in winter, dividing the hives in spring, instead of waiting as we do till they separate of themselves. They are kept in cane baskets five feet long, by six inches square, which are of easy conveyance, and may be commodiously piled up in a small space, under the rocks in a favourable exposure. This town has probably receiyed the name of *Melilli* from the reputation of its honey, and its general fertility, or from the sugar plantations, or *honied* canes once cultivated here, but now abandoned.

The mountain was called *Hybla Megara*, from the city of Megara, built here by the Greeks of Megara, a city of Achaia. This colony, a hundred years after its establishment, founded Selinus, and was destroyed by Marcellus at the time he besieged Syracuse. History relates, that Dedalus constructed here a Piscina, through which the river *Alabon* passed, before it discharged its waters into the sea. We had for our conductor, a most learned Abbé of the country, who kept thundering out passages from Thucydides, declaring he beheld Megara still in her beauty, though he had the utmost difficulty to find us two stones lying one on the other. We found, however, so great

great a quantity of fragments of *mattoni*, as to leave no room to doubt that this spot was once covered with many buildings. The river *Alabon* is still contained by a modern dyke, for the purpose of turning a mill; but instead of restoring to us the *Piscina* of *De-dalus*, it forms nothing but foetid marshes, which generate an unwholesome air. After a very close search, we at length discovered the traces of the walls of a city, which are completely demolished to the surface of the ground, but from which we may yet perceive that it was square, and very inconsiderably built, in front of a small beach, close to the seashore. This being all we could see of *Megara*, we directed our course to *Carlentini*, leaving on our right *Augusta*, a town built in the thirteenth century, by the Emperor *Frederick*, after the demolition of *Centorbi*.

A U G U S T A.

Augusta is situated on a peninsula, at the bottom of a great gulph. A castle has been added to it that defends the harbour, which is the largest and easiest of access in Sicily. In our time, the beautiful bastions of *Syracuse* have been stripped of their artillery, the great-

est part of which has been carried to Augusta: not that the artillery could defend this city, nor that this city could prevent an enemy from taking its cannon to go and batter Syracuse; but the measure may have originated in a refinement of policy, which has converted one real stronghold into two. Be this as it may, the king of Naples with the troops he has, would find it very difficult to defend the entrance of the kingdom of Sicily; and what fortified places are there, would serve rather to strengthen rebels in case of a revolt, than prove of any real utility against a powerful enemy, who should actually make an invasion.

We followed a delightful valley, in which a river, falling from level to level, forms every instant resounding cascades, or little tranquil lakes, or, dividing itself, escapes on every side in rivulets which, besides the fertility they diffuse, produce an eternal spring.

We arrived at *Villa Afmondi*, a handsome modern town, built on a little eminence, formed by an ancient volcanic eruption, the lava of which is of a reddish hue, spungy, and as hard as that of *Ætna*, though at the distance of sixty miles. Here night surprized

us,

us, and we explored our way through very difficult roads to *Carlentini*.

C A R L E N T I N I.

Carlentini is a town built by Charles V. with a view to make it the head quarters for his troops in Sicily. This project went no farther than building the walls. The houses are so low, that the streets still resemble a camp. Three thousand inhabitants live here in a very wretched manner. We had a letter of recommendation from the Bishop of Syracuse to his Grand Vicar, who lodged us in the Bernardine convent. The next day we proceeded to *Lentini* the ancient *Leontium*.

L E N T I N I.

This was an ancient, spacious, rich, and celebrated city, built by the Chalcidians at the same time with Catania. It was anciently the rival of Syracuse, but is now reduced to a population of four thousand persons, who dwell in a very inconsiderable portion of the ruins of ancient Leontium. The unwholesome

some air of the neighbouring country prevents the number of inhabitants from increasing, notwithstanding the fecundity of the soil in every species of production.

Leontium had its Tyrants, like Syracuse, of which city it was the constant enemy. It was the birth place of the celebrated rhetorician Gorgias, whose eloquence astonished even the Athenians, and who persuaded them to undertake the unfortunate expedition under Nicias. Leontium at length fell under the power of the Syracusans; and Hieronymus, son of Hiero II. the last Tyrant of Syracuse, was assassinated there as he came from the castle. The situation of this castle, and the fertility of the country at all times rendered Leontium a place of importance to the different nations which possessed Sicily. The earthquake of 1693 completed its destruction, and reduced it to its present state of wretchedness. Never was ruin more complete; the very soil seems to have been overturned, nor is it possible to represent a more perfect picture of havock and devaftation. The ancient city, built on four hills, now presents nothing to the eye but a spot of ground torn by four ravines which lay open a few wretched grottos; the sole

sole remains that point out its former situation. The castle stood on a detached rock, opposite to the city, was originally hewn out of it, and has been successively built and rebuilt, according to the style of different ages, and the prevailing modes of besieging and defending places. The ruins we now see, though considerable, can furnish no idea whatever of its ancient form. Its ditches and trenches evidently prove that these remains are none of them older than the fourteenth century. I was shewn some figures upon stones, and was told that some antiquarian travellers had determined that they were Carthaginian characters ; but I could discover nothing but a few geometrical figures scrawled by some awkward hands. This is all we saw of antiquities. We were however amused, as usual, with a number of old miraculous stories, to all of which we were obliged to listen, till a dreadful storm was over that had prevented us from proceeding on our way.

Three miles from Lentini is an immense lake, called *Bivieri*, or the lake of Lentini, belonging to the Prince *de Butera*, which produces him fifteen hundred pounds a year, for the lease of his fishery, consisting of eels, tench,

tench, and *cefalu*.^{*} The shooting here is still more surprisingly plentiful, and is remarkably commodious. Every morning the birds in the Bivieri fly to the *Pantani*, other lakes at a few miles distance; and the sportsmen, after taking as many shots at them as they please in their passage, pursue their diversion in little boats upon the lake, and in the evening shoot them at their ease in their return from the *Pantani* to the Bivieri. The game here is so various and so plentiful, that every month of the year brings fresh species, insomuch that expert marksmen every day shoot birds with which they are unacquainted. In the beginning of winter, at the time of the migrations, this would be one of the most delightful places of residence in the world for the naturalist, who should wish to complete his cabinet of natural history in river birds. I saw there the *cardinal*, never reckoned in the number of European fowl. Nor is the rest of the country less plentifully supplied with other game, woodcocks and hares may be killed in the little gardens of Lentini.

* A sort of barbel that feeds either in fresh or salt water.

We set out after dinner, and soon descended into the rich country of Leontium, now called the plain of Catania, so luxuriant in corn. This plain, twelve miles wide, by twenty in length, was formerly the country of the Læstrygons, divided and bathed by the *Simaethus*, the largest river in Sicily, that rolls along in its waters a quantity of yellow and black amber, which is sought for where it disgorges itself into the sea, and is worked up at Catania. We passed over the river by a ferry. I endeavoured to account for the extreme fertility of these plains, which render an increase from ten to fifty, of the corn sown in them. The cause seems to arise from the nature of the soil, which is a fat earth, mixed with a great quantity of the cinders of Ætna; the salts of which, continually renewed by the nitrous exhalations with which the air in the vicinity of this volcano is impregnated, render the very atmosphere productive. All these causes, combined with the mildness of the climate, have rendered this earth so teeming, that corn grows here spontaneously and wild; which may lead us to presume that the use of this plant first began to be known in Sicily. I gathered some of it myself on my first expedition, and carefully

fully examined its form, and difference from the corn with which we are acquainted.

The wild corn only shoots four inches from the ground, with a knotty straw, neither smooth nor straight like the common sort ; and when ripe, easily snaps at the knots, and suffers the ear to fall, which generally contains only three grains, covered with three very strong integuments. Each of these completely envelope the grain, and terminate in a short, but rough and firm beard, which, instead of rising upwards like the ears of other corn, shoots out in horizontal and contrary directions. The grain is small, long, and dry ; its skin thick, and the farinaceous part of it of a perfect white, with the same flavour as the flour of other corn. They tell you in the country, that three years cultivation changes its nature, and transforms it into the common kind of wheat. But I am still inclined to think it of a distinct species, as I have found it not only among stones, but in the most fertile lands, and on the edges of large fields, mixed with the other corn, but still completely retaining its harsh and wild nature.

CATANIA.

C A T A N I A.

After travelling eighteen miles since our departure from Lentini, we arrived at Catania, where I no longer found the amiable and learned Canon *Recupero*, who had died during my absence. I sincerely regretted him, as did all his friends, all the most respectable people of the city, and every one who had the pleasure of his personal acquaintance. I regretted too, that this event had disconcerted the arrangements we had made together for the publication and translation of his work on *Ætna*; but his last expressions, and the kind affiduity of the Prince de Biscaris, encouraged me to renew this negociation with the brother of the Canon.

The Prince had been just named Conservator of the antiquities of *Val Demone* and of *Noto*. Though this nomination be a little late, the court could not have adopted a better resolution, or have made a happier choice. The antiquities of the two Sicilies being an object of very important speculation, the curiosity of travellers annually bringing large sums into the country, without costing a farthing

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to the state, more especially if it should be thought proper to prohibit the exportation of these objects of curiosity, their destruction, and the purchase of inscriptions, so interesting on the spot from whence they are torn, and so inferior in value the instant they are removed into another country ; but the stealing of which is encouraged by those travellers who have the rage of purchasing, paying, and carrying away.

We set out together, after having dedicated the whole of my second stay at Catania to the company of the Prince, whose virtues and talents have rendered him equally serviceable to his country, and amiable to those whom he honours with his friendship. It is with difficulty we resolve to quit for ever, those for whom we have conceived a tender and genuine attachment. I was determined to think, therefore, that I should once more see this respectable family ; yet it was with the most sensible regret I left them. We went to dine at *Iaci*, a small well built town, extremely populous, where they manufacture a great deal of silk, and where we discovered, in general, much more activity and emulation than in the little districts on the southern coast.

IACI.

I A C I.

The origin of *Iaci* is carried back to the fabulous ages, and its name is derived from Acis, the lover of Galatea, whom the giant Polyphe-mus, in a fit of jealousy, crushed by the fall of a rock which he threw at him. Another tradition is, that a king Acis having built this city, on which he bestowed his name, had to maintain a war against a prince of the Læstrygons, who vanquished and slew him; the origin of the fiction of Polyphe-mus. However this may be, the situation of the city of Acis, or of Iaci, is considerably altered, and the modern town is undoubtedly far higher than the ancient city, if we judge from its actual elevation above the level of the sea, and the number of the different lavas, the strata of which are discovered in descending the flight of steps, leading from this town to the *Cari-catore*, which is below it; an object of curio-sity by no means to be omitted in visiting Iaci.

We set out after dinner, and continuing to traverse antique lavas, arrived at *Giarri*, where we took the plain. We crossed the river

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Freddo,

Freddo, formed, as fable tells us, by the blood of Acis crushed by Polyphemus. In the evening we forded the *Cantara*, and went to sleep, or rather pass the night at the *Giardini*, under *Tauromenium*, whither we ascended before day-break, and had once more the pleasure of viewing the rising of the sun, from the theatre, and of seeing him gild the summit of *Ætna*, whilst the vallies and the plain below were still in darkness.

After admiring this volcano under a new aspect, covered with the hoar of winter, we bid adieu to that and *Tauromenium*, thoroughly convinced that this is the most truly picturesque and most astonishing spot, for the richness and variety of its scenery, not only of Sicily, but probably of all Europe. We got to *Fiume di Nisi* by dinner, near which place are found in the mountains, the ruins of the ancient Sicilian mines. Those of antimony are still worked, and are very productive. I saw there some specimens of native lead, copper, sulphur, gold, and silver; but Sicily possesses treasures to which all her efforts should be directed, before she thinks of sacrificing to her mines, the too inconfider-

inconsiderable population, that leaves part of her surface desert.

MESSINA.

We arrived betimes at Messina, where the first news we learnt was, that it was necessary to perform quarantine on our arrival in Italy. After regulating our finances, we made an excursion to the *Pharos*, twelve miles from Messina, one of the three promontories of *Trinacria*, anciently and still called Cape *Pelorum*. We hired a bark, and purchased in our way, some large *murænæ* or lampreys, and very fine roaches, which are delicious on this coast; and whilst they were dressing for us, in the village of the *Pharos*, we went to examine the discoveries lately made in planting some trees, in a garden belonging to the Marquis of Palermo. We saw, almost at the surface of the soil, some ruins of walls in *mattoni*, coated with marble, with a pavement of white mosaic, and without compartments; some paces from this, another circular chamber, which was undoubtedly a hot bath, since there are still existing in *mattoni* the flues for conveying

the heat within the wall, thus forming a double lining. Close by, some pieces of square marble have been dug up, which appear never to have been used. The only coins found here were of the time of Constantine.

Advancing into the country, we saw a large salt lake, on whose banks we found likewise, at the surface of the earth, the vestiges of great walls, constructed in like manner in *mattoni*; some parts of these walls are still three feet high, and serve as a substruction for the house of a peasant. They tell us at Messina, that those huge columns which now decorate the nave of the cathedral were found here, and that they belonged to a temple. History speaks only of a temple built to Neptune, at Pelorum, by the giant Orion, the son of that deity: but this would certainly be to ascribe a too remote, as well as fabulous, antiquity to these ruins, whose structure appeared to me Roman, and might have formed part of the villa of some Roman quæstor of Messina. The truth of this conjecture might easily be ascertained by continuing the researches, which would be attended with the less difficulty, as the soil is only

only a light sand, and it would be scarcely necessary to dig, in order to make discoveries, or at least to gratify curiosity; but the total want of taste of the Messinians for these inquiries, will long prevent the veil which covers the antiquities of Pelorum from being removed.

I made the tour of that tongue of low land that forms this cape, and was more and more confirmed in my opinion, that all the systems founded on the supposed avulsion of the shore of Messina, from the corresponding strata on the opposite hills of Calabria and Sicily, can never be maintained, but are merely the idle fancies of men of learning, who never saw the straits. The same observation may be extended to the pretended enlargement of this passage, which renders, as has been said, the two shoals of Scylla and Charybdis less terrible than in the time of the ancients. But, on examining their situation, we perceive beyond a doubt, that these shoals never have changed places; Charybdis having always been at the entrance of the harbour of Messina, and Scylla twelve miles from it, over against the Pharos, in the midst of rocks; in the form of which neither time, nor the perpetual dashing

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of the waves, nor currents, have been able to produce any change, since it was described to us by the Greeks. It may be observed too, that this rock, whose aspect is still as frightful, as it is truly terrible in effect, is lined and supported by huge perpendicular mountains, which cut off all hope from the wretched mariners, who may chance to strike on it; that it is of such a nature as never to have allowed the channel to widen on this side; and that on the opposite shore, which is the narrowest part of the passage, the coast is low, and the soil composed of sand and pumice stone of Stromboli, of which this neck of land is not only entirely formed, but has so sensibly extended itself as already to leave the tower considerably behind, though by no means of ancient date. It is an easy matter likewise to discover, that this passage is to the full as dangerous as formerly, and that if the modern descriptions paint it with fewer terrors, it is because they are not written by poets.

I embarked for Tropæa

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

For Castle of Abdale, read Labdalon, — p. 339.

For Tycha, read Tyche; (a quarter of Syracuse.) *ibid.*



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